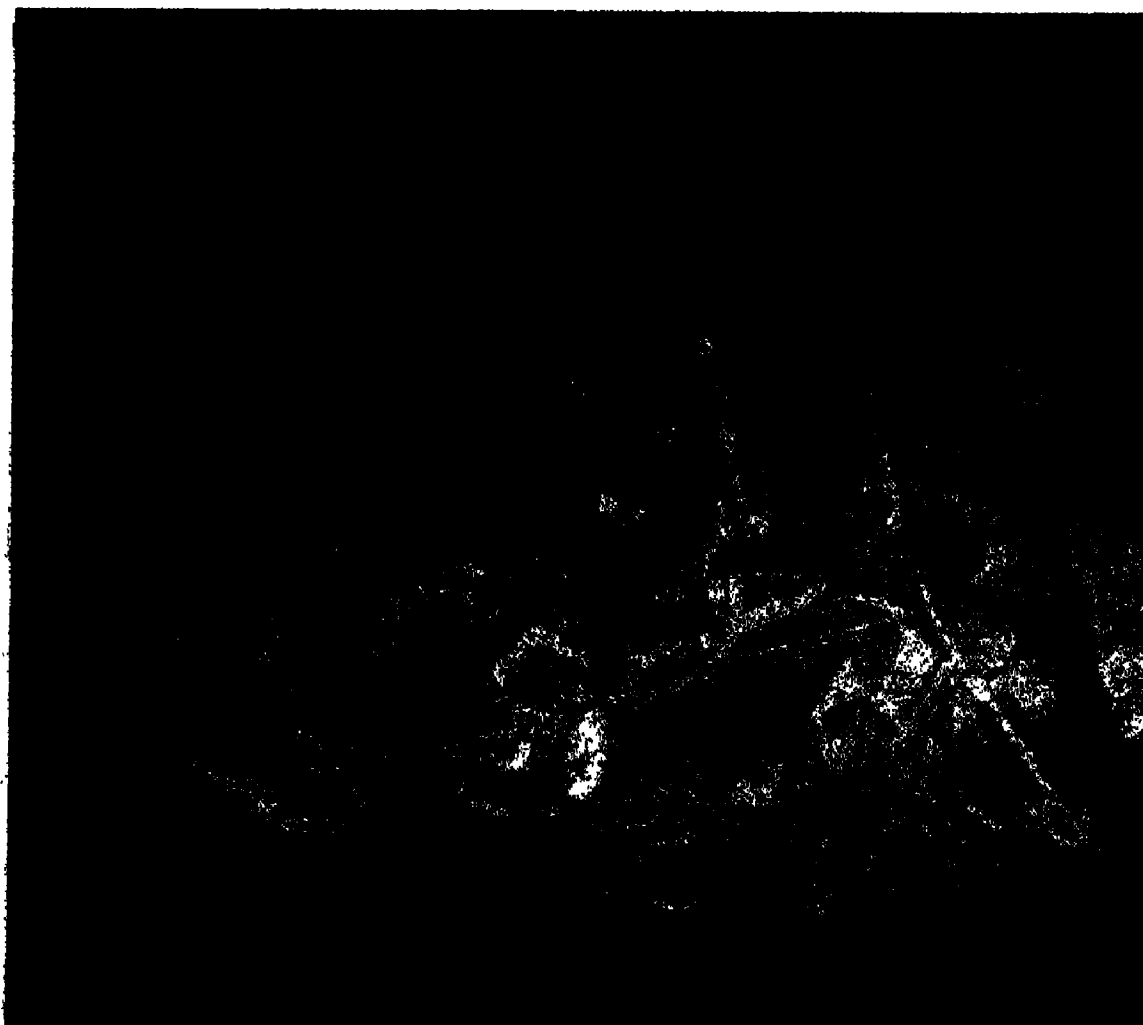
Fig. 15. Kailasanātha Temple, Pallava, 7th century, Kāñchīpuram

Pallava

7th-9th centuries A.D.

THE Pallavas, from their capital at Kāñchī, ruled a large kingdom, which extended in the North to the Kṛishṇā valley, and in the South to the Kāverī at Tiruchirāpalli. Vishṇugopa, ruler of Kāñchī, was among the kings who fought valiantly against Samudragupta, and were vanquished. Siṃhavishṇu, in the 6th century, was a great king of this dynasty, who had a powerful matrimonial alliance with the Vishṇukuṇḍi king in the region of the Kṛishṇā. Siṃhavishṇu's son, Mahendravarman I, was the first of this dynasty to introduce rock-cut architecture into the Tamil area. Mahendravarman was descended from the Vishṇukuṇḍins, rulers in the Kṛishṇā valley, through his mother. The art of the Vishṇukuṇḍins at Vijayavāḍa had impressed the young Pallava prince and there is a great similarity between the rock-cut temples at Mogalrājapuram and those of Mahendravarman in the Tamil country. His famous inscription at Maṇḍagapaṭṭu: *etadanishṭakam adrumam alauham asudham vichittrachittena nirmāpitam nṛipeṇa brahmeśvaravishṇulakshitāyatanam:* 'This temple for Brahmā, Iśvara and Vishṇu has been created by the curious-minded king without the use of bricks, wood, metal or mortar' introduced as an innovation among the structural temples of usual materials. Mahendravarman bore such titles as *Vichitrachitta,* the curious art-minded one; *Chitrakārapuli,* a tiger among painters; *Mattavilāsa,* exuberant in sport;

SOUTH INDIAN PAINTINGS

Frontispiece: Śiva as Tripurāntaka, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Tañjāvūr, Courtesy of the Archaeological Survey of India

SOUTH INDIAN PAINTINGS

C. SIVARAMAMURTI

NATIONAL MUSEUM, NEW DELHI

To
Dr. Sarvepalle Radhakrishnan
with affection and esteem

Yadyat sādhu na chitre syāt kṛiyate tattad anyathā
tathāpi tasyā lāvaṇyam rekhayā kiñchidanvitam
—*Abhijñānaśākuntalam* VI, 16

Imperfections, if any, can be idealised in art. Even so Śakuntalā's radiant beauty could only partially be revealed in the lines composing her figure.

Note: Years ago my revered Professor Mahāmahopādhyāya S. Kuppuswami Sastri gave me a revealing interpretation of this verse. He split up the line into *yadyat sādhu na* and *chitre tad anyathā syātkṛiyate: syātkṛiyate* in the sense of *kṛiyeta*.

FOREWORD

THE present book by Mr. C. Sivaramamurti on South Indian paintings is the product of his thorough knowledge of art in his native South India and of his intimate familiarity with Sanskrit texts, both those concerned primarily with the arts and those on other themes, referring incidentally to painting, painters and their methods. He has provided a framework of history within which to place the evolution of painting in the South, citing epigraphical evidence when pertinent. He often explains subject matter and iconography and points out as well examples of continuation of traditions, and parallels in sculpture of earlier or later periods, of which he fears the significance might otherwise be overlooked.

Some of the illustrations here have been reproduced elsewhere, and many of the paintings have been reported in earlier accounts of a place or a period, but this book for the first time brings together examples of painting in the South, from the earliest fragments of murals still surviving, up to the paintings on walls, in albums and on panels of the recent past. It provides a coherent survey through periods and styles of painting in a part of India where art developed over a long period of time, according to indigenous canons and requirements, unaffected, and then only superficially and at a late period, by outside influences.

The introductory chapters, based on a considerable number of Sanskrit sources, provide much information useful to the student of art, and not previously easily available, certainly not to be found in any one place. The references to the widespread use of painting in the South from early times, as an enrichment, not only of places of worship and religious use, but also of the luxurious interiors of palaces and of resorts of different types, for the cultivated, rich and elegant, give some indication of its contemporary importance as an art form, now mostly forgotten because so little survives as compared to the more durable sculptural adornment of ancient monuments. The descriptions of the painter as a member of his society, of the appreciation accorded to him and his art by connoisseurs of his time, and of his tools, materials and professional and technical practices, and the summing up of the art of painting of the final chapter provide an approach in the terms of history of art sure to be appreciated.

Mr. Sivaramamurti has considered himself a guide to his subject. He has endeavoured to give abundant and characteristic visual evidence in his illustrations of the successive periods and styles of painting in the various regions of the South. Where the survivals are meagre and difficult to decipher in the best possible photographic reproductions that could be obtained, he has, by his own sensitive draughtsmanship, retraced the significant outlines and the illegible gestures and details indispensable for understanding the work.

The book must be taken as an invitation to review art in the South with a learned mentor, devoted to his subject, who can portray for it, from his vast knowledge of history, of traditional literature and of the specific circumstances, social and environmental, in which the paintings were done, an intimately known background which he is striving to share with his readers. It is a book that is peculiarly an expression of the knowledge, experience and personality of the author, as scholar, as lover of art and as museum man, teaching others about the art of his own land.

All those who study and admire Indian art have reason to be grateful to Mr. Sivaramamurti for his generous effort to open to them his own particular point of view and his appreciation for the painting of the South, through almost two thousand years. It gives me pleasure to commend to his readers' attention an Indian subject, interpreted through Indian vision and Indian sensibility, by a colleague from whom I myself have learned so much more about Indian art than can easily be described.

GRACE MORLEY

PREFACE

SEVERAL years ago, when I had just emerged from the Presidency College and was working as University Research Student under our revered Professor Mahamahopadhyaya S. Kuppuswami Sastri on 'Painting in Sanskrit Literature' I visited Tanjavur at the invitation of my friend Dr. V. Raghavan, now a distinguished Professor of Sanskrit, and saw the Chola paintings then recently discovered by Mr. S. K. Govindaswami. I copied them and wrote a short paper on Chola painting in the *Triveni* at the instance of my friend Mr. Manjeri S. Isvaran, who was selflessly devoting himself to the cause of this magnificent quarterly. Later I set out to see the fragments of painting in the Kailasanatha Temple at Kanchipuram and identified the Somaskanda after copying it. Professor Jouveau Dubreuil, the discoverer of the paintings, was so happy that he specially came to Madras to assure me that my identification was right. My archaeological guru, Mr. T. N. Ramachandran, took me to Tirumalaipuram when he went there to see the then newly discovered Pandya paintings at Tirumalaipuram and we both wrote in the *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Calcutta. Later still I was informed of the Lepakshi paintings by my cousin Dewan Bahadur V. N. Visvanatha Rao, who was then Collector of Anantapur and invited me to study them. I copied the Vijayanagara paintings and published papers on them in the *Vijayanagara Sexcentenary Commemoration Volume* and in the *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, Calcutta. At the instance of my friend Mr. Karl J. Khandalavala I contributed a paper on the Badami paintings to the *Lalit Kala*. The pictures on the palm leaf manuscripts representing Hoysala painting are very rare ones of which I was supplied some colour films by my esteemed friend Mr. Chhotelal Jain who, realising that they were not good enough, kindly arranged for the original manuscripts themselves being brought over to Delhi for the Manuscripts Exhibition arranged in the National Museum on the occasion of the Oriental Congress, when they were photographed in colour, with the kind permission of the authorities of the Jaina Basadi at Moodbidri. At the invitation of Professor Malalasekhara I wrote on Ajanta paintings in the *Buddhist Encyclopaedia*. His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi graciously invited my attention some years ago to the Nayaka paintings in the Kapardisvara Temple at Tiruvalanjuli.

It has been my desire to write a book specially devoted to South Indian Paintings, and it was long unfulfilled, till I was invited by Dr. Grace Morley to write on this subject for the publication series of the National Museum. I am glad it has been possible for me to complete this task. I have here tried to give an introductory study to what is a great mass of material requiring several years of research and presentation of each of the different schools separately in many volumes. I cannot adequately express my indebtedness to several valuable earlier books in the field that I have listed in the Bibliography. I have

received friendly help from several sister organizations like the Archaeological Survey of India, the Departments of Archaeology, Andhra Pradesh and Travancore, and the Boston Museum in the form of photos in monochrome and colour for which I am most grateful. To my friend Mr. Douglas Barrett of the British Museum I am specially thankful for arranging with SKIRA to supply us with blocks for six of the paintings published in his book, Painting of India, from colour film specially prepared in India. To Dr. Morley, who was formerly the Director of the National Museum and is now Adviser on Museums to the Government of India, and who evinced inordinate interest in my research and publications, I am unable to find words to express my sense of indebtedness for her very careful reading of my text and offering valuable suggestions that have greatly enhanced its value. I am equally grateful to her for her kind foreword. To Dr. A. M. D' Rozario and Mr. T. S. Krishnamurti, Joint Secretary and Deputy Secretary respectively, Ministry of Education, and Mr. V. P. Agnihotri, formerly of the Ministry of Education and now Director of Estates, I am deeply indebted for their special interest in expediting the publication. In this the help and cooperation of Mr. T. N. Bahel, Chief Controller of Printing and Stationery and Mr. R. Ramaswamy, Controller of Printing and Stationery, has been most effective and I am beholden to them for this. I am happy in expressing my thanks to Dr. P. Banerjee for all that he has done to see the book through the Press, attending to every detail of a laborious process. The lay-out was carefully arranged by Mr. B. S. Bist and the Index was quickly prepared by Mr. G. D. Khullar, who have both my best thanks. I take this opportunity to thank one and all who have contributed towards the speedy publishing of this book in a form worthy of the National Museum standard of book production.

I am most thankful to Mr. Lal Chand Roy and Mr. K. C. Mullick for their personal cooperation and help in expediting the production of the book.

C. SIVARAMAMURTI

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INTRODUCTORY

INDIA has a great tradition in art. In common with the rest of the country South India has magnificent examples to represent this tradition.

Art has a softening influence on the mind and the senses of man. The remark of Kālidāsa that even the happiest person feels elated when he sees beautiful things or hears melodious notes is singularly true. Music, like art, deeply stirs the heart; and probably the impression of beautiful form has an even greater effect.

In Chinese art the representation is as the eye sees; in Indian art it is not only as the eye sees but also as the touch feels, as there is always effort to portray the volume of the figure. Paintings in India make an attempt at modelling. This is to be explained by the fact that the concept of the highest portrayal in India is in terms of the figure in the round, called, *chitra.* The figure in relief, high or low, is *ardhachitra* and the painting resembling sculpture is *chitrābhāsa.* The very term *chitrābhāsa* shows that the aim of the artist is to portray some kind of modelling in order to suggest volume. It is interesting to note in this connection the remark of Kālidāsa, through the mouth of Dushyanta, *skhalatīva me drishṭirnimnonnateshu,* 'my eyes seem to roam over depths and elevations', meaning thereby the modelling of the body portrayed in the picture.

Of the "six limbs" of painting, *shaḍaṅga,* modelling, occupies an important place; others are: variety of form, *rūpabheda,* proportion, *pramāṇa*; *bhāva-yojanā,* the infusion of emotions; *lāvaṇya-yojanā,* creation of lustre and iridescence; *sādṛiśya,* portrayal of likeness; *varṇikābhaṅga,* colour mixing to produce the effect of modelling.

There is a further elucidation of the process in the *Vishṇudharmottara,* where the strong points in paintings are described. 'The line sketch, the most important, firmly and gracefully drawn, is considered the highest achievement by the masters': *rekhām praśamsantyāchāryāḥ*; 'there are others who consider shading and depiction of modelling as the best': *vartanām apare jaguḥ*; 'feminine taste appreciates decoration in art': *striyo bhūshaṇamichchhanti;* 'but the common taste is for the splendour and glory of colour': *varṇāḍhyamitare janāḥ.* This *vartana* or shading is of three kinds: *bindujavartana, patravartana* and *raikhikavartana.* The first is stippling, the second, cross-hatching and the third, fine line-shading.

Excellent delineation was achieved with the minimum of drawing, *api laghu likhiteyam dṛiśyate pūrṇamūrtiḥ,* as remarked by the Vidūshaka in the *Viddhasālabhañjikā,* with almost the full form of the figures suggested. This is the greatness of powerful line drawing. Excessive decoration and loud colouring were considered almost a blemish. In the enumeration of *chitraguṇas* and *chitradoshas,* i.e. merits and defects in paintings, an excess of anything was considered a fault.

The very fact that there was a classification like *viddhachitras* and *aviddhachitras*, i.e. portraits and studies from life in general, shows that special care was taken to produce faithful portraits. We have several instances of portraits, like the famous painting from Qyzyl, Chinese Turkistan, depicting the gentle mode of breaking the news of the Master's passing away to Ajātaśatru with the aid of a *chitrapaṭa*, or painted scroll, with several scenes from the Master's life, including his *parinirvāṇa* which shows how early such paintings were used. In the *Dūtavākya* of Bhāsa (3rd-2nd century B.C.), a painting of Duśśāsana, molesting Draupadī in the court, is presented and unrolled to be seen. The *Pratimānāṭaka* also by the same author describes portraits. It is a portrait that constitutes the theme of the *Viddhasālabhañjikā*. In the *Kāvyaprakāśa*, a pathetic verse depicting the pet parrot in the deserted household of a fallen king, begging of painted figures of the princess and her attendants on the walls to give him food, mistaking the pictures for the living persons suggests the ability of the ancient Indian painter at portrait work. But taking the historic period, we have several portraits both in sculpture and painting. The paintings of the king and queen at Sittannavāśal (9th century A.D.), Rājarāja Choḷa with his consorts (1000 A.D.) at Tañjāvūr, Vīraṇṇa, and Virūpaṇṇa at Lepākshī (16th century A.D.) are fine examples of kings and noblemen responsible for covering vast wall space with wonderful paintings of the period.

The painting of emotion in pictures is best illustrated in such masterpieces as the mother and child before Buddha or the subjugation of Nalagiri, from Ajaṇṭā. *Karuṇarasa* (the feeling of pity) is effectively presented in the former, while in the latter there is first *bhayānakarasa* (the feeling of terror) in the stampede of the elephant Nalagiri, and *śāntarasa* (the sense of tranquility) is where the furious animal lies humble at the feet of the Master. *Bhāvaśabalatā* or the commingling of emotions is presented in such pictures as the host of demons fighting with Tripurāntaka, portrayed in the Bṛihadīśvara Temple at Tañjāvūr; the fierce aspect of the *rākshasas* determined to fight and win or die, in contrast to the tearful wives, clinging to them, and dissuading them from fighting an impossible opponent, is an instance of *bhāvaśabalatā* or the commingling of more than one emotion, here *raudra*, *karuṇa* and *śṛiṅgāra* (fury, pity and love).

Suggestion as an important element in art has been specially stressed in the *Vishṇudharmottara*, where various methods for suggesting various aspects of nature are enumerated, like portraying lotuses in bloom, ṛishis hurrying for a bath and so forth, to suggest day-break; prowling thieves, amorous damsels going to the place of their tryst and so on to suggest night; lotuses and aquatic beings to indicate water; over-cast clouds and white cranes flying in the sky to recall the rainy season; pleasant flower-decked forests and gardens to suggest spring; travellers oppressed by heat and greatly fatigued to mean summer and so on. All these means are carefully followed in paintings and are to be understood in order to comprehend fully the meaning of a picture, especially in the later-day miniature paintings from Rājasthān; in *bārāmāsa* paintings and those presenting the loves of the *nāyakas* and *nāyikās*, in scenes of tryst with *śukla* or *kṛishṇa abhisārikā*, *utkaṇṭhā* and *viraha*, over-cast cloudy sky or the moonlit night, when the pang of separation is most acute, all is depicted in the most eloquent language of the brush.

The Indian Painter

THE earliest reference to a painter in an inscription in India is in the 2nd century B.C., in the Ramgarh (Jogimāra) Cave, in early characters, mentioning a *rupadakha* and his sweetheart, an adept in dance. In India, where art permeated life, every young man and woman with taste had a knowledge of art, dance and music, as essential factors in literary and aesthetic education. In fact the amateur artists with knowledge enough fully to appreciate art trends in the country were very numerous and judged the art of the professionals.

Art was a *vinodasthāna*, and painting, being an easier medium than modelling and sculpture, was probably more readily practised. In the *Kāmasūtra* (early centuries of the Christian era), painting is given as one of the many arts cultivated by a *nāgaraka*, a gentleman of taste, and his chamber had a lute (*vīṇā*), hanging by a peg on the wall, a painting board (*chitraphalaka*), a casket full of brushes (*vartikā-samudgaka*), a beautiful illuminated manuscript, and sweet-smelling flower garlands. The *chitrakara* was a professional artist of eminence and the *diṇḍis* were inferior craftsmen. There is a reference in the *Uttararāmacharita* to a *chitrakara* named Arjuna responsible for the pictures illustrating the life of Rāma in the palace. The respect shown to architects, artists and painters, required to decorate the royal palace on the occasion of the marriage of princess Rājyaśrī, as described in the *Harshacharita*, shows that they had a distinct place of honour. When they were commissioned to do a work, they were honoured before they started on it. In the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, there is mention of a painter who benefited by ten villages as a gift from the king. A place was allocated to the *chitrakaras*, along with the sculptors, jewellers, goldsmiths, wood carvers, metal craftsmen and others in the assembly of poets, scholars, etc.

Great masters were specially honoured and they were invited to judge the works of art. These *chitravidyopādhyāyas* were adept in different branches of art. The great proficiency of masters in architecture, sculpture and painting and other allied branches is recorded in several inscriptions, including one from Paṭṭaḍakal, where the *śilpī* from the southern region, especially brought by Vikramāditya, to build the Virūpāksha Temple, describes himself as an adept in all the branches of fine arts. A scribe of the time of Vikramāditya VI, of the Western Chāḷukya family, boasts of his skill in designing beautiful letters in artistic form entwining into them shapes of birds and animals. In the *Mālavikāgnimitra*, the queen on entering the *chitraśālā*, with the walls freshly painted, gazes intently on the paintings representing the harem with its retinue, which, as works of a master, naturally excite admiration. In the *Viddhasālbhañjikā*, the queen's nephew, occasionally dressed in feminine attire as a damsel, is mistaken by painters (*chitrakaras*), and so represented almost life-like on the palace walls, causing the king to mistake him for a girl. The court of a king was frequented by numerous *chitrakaras*, as we learn from several references, and there is an interesting instance of a singularly beautiful picture of a princess prepared by the painter desiring to demonstrate his skill in the royal palace. There is a reference to one Kumāradatta as the best

painter in the court of king Prithvīrūpa of Pratishṭhāna in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*. Another distinguished painter from Vidarbha, named Roladeva, is mentioned in the same work. The respectable *chitrāchārya*, Śivasvāmin, an expert in painting, is described as the lover of a courtesan in the *Pādatāḍitaka*. That the painters were quite at home in the *veśavāsas* and had naive companions in the form of *naṭas*, *nartakas* and *viṭas*, *veśyās* and *kuṭṭanīs* also shows that they had not an altogether high status in society, though their art was appreciated at the highest level. The ideal of art as *vinodasthāna*, art for pleasure, amongst the *nāgarakas* was just the opposite in the case of the courtesan. She also learned art, though neither as a professional nor as an amateur, but as one able to flaunt her proficiency in fine arts in order to attract her suitors and to flourish in her profession. Dāmodaragupta so describes her in his *Kuṭṭanīmata*. Kshemendra openly ridicules the morals of the *śilpi* class of his day.

But the trained artist with *hastochchaya*, 'a skilled hand in producing pictures', was still a great one in his field. In contrast to the *chitrāchāryas*, known for their *hastochchaya*, were the *diṇḍins*, inferior artists of mediocre taste, usually employed to repair old pictures, carvings and flags, who very nearly ruined them. It is no wonder that they were considered not very different from monkeys, *diṇḍino hi nāmaite nātiviprakṛishṭā vānarebhyaḥ*, *Pādatāḍitaka* (p. 21). They are described as ruining pictures by adding and dabbing colours with brushes, thus darkening the original tint: *ālekhyam ātmalipibhir gamayanti nāśam saudheshu kūrchakamashīmalam arpayanti*, *Pādatāḍitaka* (p. 21).

The artist prepared his own colours and carried them, along with the brushes, in boxes, *samudgakas*, and gourds, *alābus*, specially designed for the purpose. Paintings on cloth, duly rolled, were preserved in silken covers.

In the *Mṛichchhakaṭika* is described a painter at work (Fig. 1), surrounded by a large number of colour pans, from each of which he would just take a little to put on the canvas: *yo nāmāham tatrabhavatas chārudattasya ṛiddhyāhorātram prayatnasiddhair uddāmasurabhigandhibhir modakair eva aśitābhyantarachatuśśālakadvāra upavishṭo mallakaśataparivṛita chitrakara ivāngulībhis spṛishṭvā spṛishṭvāpanayāmi*, (Act I). The artist was fully conscious of a good picture when he achieved it and, even while painting, would nod his head in joyous approbation. This special trait of the painter has been noted by Vālmīki, Kshemendra, Harshavardhana, and others: *vīkshya yam bahu dhuvan śiro jarāvātakī vidhirakalpi śilpirāṭ*, *Naishadhīyacharita* (XVIII, 12); *yayau vilolayan maulim rūpātiśayavismitaḥ*, *Bṛihatkathāmañjarī* (ix, 1121); *śirāmsi chalitāni vismayavaśād dhruvam vedhaso vidhāya lalanām jagattrayalalāmabhūtām imām*, *Ratnāvalī*, (Act II, 41).

But this does not mean pride or self-praise. We know that the painters in ancient India had the humility to invite criticism and politely to accept it. In fact, the *Tilakamañjarī* mentions inviting connoisseurs to appraise a picture: *tadasya kuru kalāśāstrakuśalasya kauśalikam* and *kumāra asti kiñchiddarśanayogyam atra chitrapaṭe, udbhūtotra paṭe kopi dosho vā nātimātram pratibhāti* (pp. 133 and 135).

The painter had always a delight in fashioning the pictures with his own hand and tried to do his best. His experimental sketches were known as *hastalekhas*, and these preliminary sketches are often mentioned in literature. The word *varṇaka* is a final *hastalekha*, comparable to the 'determinant sketch' mentioned by Ruskin, and in this connotation occurs often in literature.

Fig. 1. The Painter at work, 18th century, Kangra School. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Various stages in painting a picture can be easily gathered from passages in literature such as the preparation of the ground; the drawing of the sketch, technically known as *rekhāpradāna* or *chitrasūtra-dāna,* almost measured out on the board; the filling in with colours; the modelling achieved by the three types of *vartanas* and so forth. The final process of making the picture live is the *chitronmīlana,* infusing of life into it. In fact there is a maxim based on this *chitronmīlana.* The beauty of Pārvatī is compared by Kālidāsa to a picture infused with life by the process of *unmīlana*: *unmīlitam tūlikayeva chitram, Kumāra-sambhava,* (i, 32). This is the act, after finishing the rest of the picture, of the painter finally painting in the eyes. The process is even now a living tradition amongst the hereditary craftsmen in India and Ceylon.

The habits of artists are suggested by numerous references. Kshemendra calls some of them *kālachoras*, thieves of time, as they generally put off their work, though anxious enough to receive their wages on time. But the artist was always conscious of the superiority of his art and when occasion required, he would do his best to prove his worth. There was a method of challenging other painters in royal courts. A great painter approaching the palace gate would put a flag aloft, with his challenge painted on it, asking anyone who accepted the challenge to pull it down. This led to a competition in the court and a decision by the ruler, with honour for the victor.

But the painter or sculptor in India usually dedicated himself to his art in such a way that he made it almost an offering to the Divine Spirit and subordinated himself, with the result that most names of artists in India are unknown. In the *Saundaryalaharī*, Śankara lists even the *śilpa* as *pūjāvidhāna*. The way a painting is to be undertaken in the orthodox manner is described in the lines of the *Vishṇudharmottara* that directs the painter to sit facing east in devoted fashion and offer prayers before beginning his work.

The mental and physical state of the *chitrakara* is believed always to be reflected in his paintings. The *Vishṇudharmottara* mentions *anyachittatā*, or absentmindedness, as one of the causes that ruin the formation of a good picture. A common belief mentioned in the *Viddhasālabhañjikā: evem etat, yato garishṭhagoshṭhīshvapyevam kila śrūyate yādṛiśas chitrakaras tādṛiśī chitrakarmarūparekhā, yādṛiśaḥ kavis tādṛiśī kāvyabandhachchhāyā, Viddhasālabhañjikā* (Act I), is that a picture generally reflects the merits of the artist, even as the literary work reveals the poet in its excellence. The same idea is repeated in the *Kāvyamīmāmsā: sa yatsvabhāvaḥ kavis tādṛiśarūpam kāvyam, yādṛiśākāraś chitrakaras tādṛiśākāram asya chitram iti prāyo vādaḥ* (Chap. X).

Painter's Tools and Materials

THE materials required by the painter are described both in the *Śilpa* texts and in general Sanskrit literature, wherever there is reference to painting. There is thus adequate information to allow understanding the requirements of the artist in producing his paintings. In the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana we are told that the *Nāgaraka* has a *samudgaka,* or box full of brushes, a drawing board and an easel. Similarly a number of pans containing colours, in which to dip his brushes, are mentioned in the *Mṛichchhakaṭika.* Even the window sill of the painter has colour pans, as described in the *Pādatāḍitaka.* Bāṇa refers to *alābus,* or gourds with brushes, attached to picture boards, in his *Harshacharita,* while Kālidāsa talks of a box full of colours, *varṇikā-karaṇḍa-samudgakas,* or boxes of brushes. They are also mentioned in the *Daśakumāracharita* and the *Ratnāvalī.*

The *Śilpa* texts, like the *Abhilashitārthachintāmaṇi,* mention brushes and *vartikās,* the latter variously called *tinduvarti* or *kiṭṭavarti,* 'stumps' for sketching. The brushes called *kūrchakas, lekhinīs* and *tūlikās,* are elaborately described. The *vartikā,* also called *kiṭṭalekhanī,* is made of the sweet-smelling root, *Khachora,* mixed with boiled rice rolled into a pointed "stump", or of brick powder mixed with dry cow dung finely ground, and, with water added, made into a paste for preparing similar stumplike rolls for sketching.

The *tūlikā* is a thin bamboo rod with a small copper pin stuck into it and a small feather attached, used for corrections.

The *lekhinī* is used for applying colours. It is a *tūlikā,* with soft hair from the ear of the calf fixed at one end with lac, and is of various degrees of thickness for broad and fine strokes. There are varieties of brushes, large, medium and small, depending on the varieties of soft hair of which they are made. The hair from the tail of the squirrel and from the belly of the sheep are also favourites for brushes.

The use of these different implements with specific reference to outlines in colour and wash is all very interesting reading in the *Abhilāshitārthachintāmaṇi* and other texts. The wash, or *ākshālana,* is done with the *kūrchaka,* a big brush, and the fine *tūlikā* or *śalākā* is used for *unmīlana,* or drawing the final fine lines for opening the eyes of the figure.

The *paṭa* or canvas, used for painting was rolled and preserved in silken and other covers. The *phalaka* or board covered with cloth for the painting is also described. But the most popular surface for painting was the *bhitti* or wall, and murals were called *bhittichitra.*

The colours were all of vegetable and mineral origin; *gairika,* red; *nīlī,* blue; *sudhā,* white; *kajjala,* black and *haritāla,* yellow, in addition to others. The binding medium for colours was of animal and vegetable origin, *vajralepa* and *niryāsakalka* respectively.

Chitraśālās

THE spirit of art is present everywhere in India and it is difficult to find even a utensil or piece of cloth without some decoration. Walls of houses are painted and floors have patterns; even pots and pans have decorative designs in colour or low relief. Some type of art is found in everyday life in the remotest corners of villages. Even animals, like cows and calves, horses and elephants, are decorated. But in India art had also its own honoured place, in art galleries, where it was fostered from the earliest times. These galleries are known as *Chitraśālās*.

There are references to *Chitraśālās* in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Māhābhārata*, and several other Sanskrit texts of varying dates that cumulatively provide an idea of the building and its contents. As the tradition is common all over the country, numerous references in Tamil literature to *Chitraśālās* serve generally to describe them. The famous city of the *Choḷas* at Puhār is described as "resplendent with picture galleries" and its palaces were lavishly painted with murals. The tradition of murals is an ancient one in the South and the temples as well as royal palaces, both known as *prāsādas*, were decorated with murals like picture galleries, though they were not purely for aesthetic enjoyment. The word in Tamil for painting is *oviyam* but *Chitraśālai, chitramāḷigai, chitrakūṭa, eḷuteḷilambalam, eḷuttunilaimaṇḍapam* all mean painted halls. Halls with murals were like permanent galleries of art, while changing exhibitions were possible when painted scrolls were unrolled and hung. The *Nāradaśilpasūtra*, a late medieval text from the South, describes the architectural form of a picture gallery.

There are three different types of *Chitraśālās:* the art galleries in the palace, the public art galleries and the private art galleries. In the first category are also to be counted the *chitraśālās* of the harem. Some princesses had their own bedrooms converted into *chitraśālās* or had *chitraśālās* adjoining their sleeping apartments: *śayanachitraśālās*. Looking at an auspicious object on waking up was considered a good omen, which accounts for them. Bathing apartments had adjoining picture galleries: *abhishe-khachitraśālikās*.

Many private *chitraśālās*, particularly those in the houses of courtesans, were elaborate. This was the setting for activities of *viṭas, dhūrtas* and *cheṭas*, (gentlemen, rakes and sycophants), a veritable treasure house of all the fine arts. Only certain types of pictures, representing *śṛṅgāra, hāsya* and *śānta* (love, mockery and peace) were allowed in private houses, including the king's residence. But in temples and other public and dance chambers, and in the public apartments of the royal palace, every type of picture could be shown. The preference, however, in all painting was for *māṅgalyālekhya*, or auspicious themes.

The word *vimānapankti* is used by Bāṇa to indicate a row of mansions in which the picture galleries were. *Vīthīs* as used by Bhavabhūti were well arranged, long art galleries. The text of the *Nāradaśilpa*,

as mentioned above, gives a description of the building for the *chitraśālās*. It is to be built as a *vimāna* (mansion) with a small *gopura* (gateway) in front, provided with *śikhara-kalaśas* (a steeple ornamented with urns), with windows at intervals for the long galleries. Ornamental doorways, decorated balconies, verandahs, massive pillars supporting the main structure, are all details of the *chitraśālā* gathered from references to it in literature in general.

According to the *Nāradaśilpa*, the *chitraśālā* should be located at the junction of four roads, opposite a temple or a royal palace, or in the centre of the king's highway. It could have different plans, drum-shaped or circular; it could have a verandah, a small hall, a main central hall and side halls and stairs leading to the upper storey. It could be supported by sixteen, twenty or thirty-two pillars, provided with several windows, an ornamental canopy, have several square terraces near the entrances, and stairs from either side leading to several halls and be provided with seats for visitors to rest. The roof is to be ornamented with *śikhara* and *kalaśa* to give the entire structure the form of a *vimāna*. Handsome chandeliers and mirrors were used for illuminating the halls. The main building is ornamented with a small *gopura*.

The galleries are provided with different types of pictures, of *devas*, *gandharvas*, *kinnaras* (gods, divine minstrels and dancers) and so forth, of mighty heroes and of various other noble themes, all well-drawn in proper proportions, coloured attractively and decorated with jewels, all in gold.

The themes of the pictures in the galleries are sometimes scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, described by Bhavabhūti and Kālidāsa or episodes from Damayantī's life, described by Śrī Harsha. Contemporary life is also portrayed, as in the dramas, the *Mālavikāgnimitra* and the *Viddhasālabhañjikā*.

Śṛiṅgāra pictures (pictures inspired by love themes) in art galleries, are described at some length in the *Naishadhīyacharita*, and the love of sages and their romances with celestial maidens, like the dalliance of Indra, are themes for exquisite pictures in the imperial palace. Pictures of Kāmadeva (the god of love) had a special place in the bedroom, though they were painted in other places, too. This may be compared with similar references in the *Paripāḍal* where Indra's overtures to Ahalyā and the sports of Kāma and Rati are described painted as murals. It should have been a principal theme in the *Chitraśālā* of the harem as well as in the *śayanachitraśālās*. Bāṇa mentions *nāgas*, *devas*, *asuras*, *yakshas*, *kinnaras*, *garuḍas* (snakes, celestials, demons, gnomes, dancers, harpies) as prominently represented in the pictures. He also refers to lovely designs of creepers and decorative foliage. In the *Navasāhasāṅkacharita*, hunting scenes are mentioned in the picture gallery, and these can be understood in the context of general gay scenes, like *jalakrīḍā* (water sports), *pānagoshṭhī* (drinking bouts), *rāsalīlā* (group dances), etc. The motifs of animals and birds are frequent and favourite subjects.

When we recall the themes that have survived in painting, like the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Nalacharita*, *Bhāgavata*, contemporary court scenes, and lovers, *śṛiṅgāra cheshṭās* (dalliance) and the seasons, as well as iconographic pictures and decorative designs, motifs of animals and birds, in all of the Mughal, Rājasthāni and Pahāri schools, which are comparatively recent, this continuous tradition becomes very clear.

From literature in general we know several interesting facts about *Chitraśālās*. There were stationary ones and others on wheels, which could be moved from one place to another, as mobile museums or

travelling art galleries. The *Chitraśālās* were delicately perfumed in the interior. The galleries were open in the evenings, enabling visitors to spend their time pleasantly there. They were also a place of diversion for lovers. In the *śarad* (autumn) season, the pleasantest part of the year, *Chitraśālās* were most frequented by visitors.

Though the *Chitraśālās*, especially, were repositories of art treasures, the other apartments of buildings were not without decoration. Schools and libraries had paintings of *Sarasvatī*; *Vidyāmaṇḍapas* (halls of learning) were sometimes painted with scenes of the after-life. Even the *Sūtikā-gṛiha*, or the apartments for childbirth, had pleasant pictures. The *Nāṭyaśālā* (dance hall) was profusely decorated with appropriate pictures. But the *Chitraśālā* was the main centre for knowledge of art. The *chitragṛiha*, house of pictures, as a *Kalāsthāna*, place of amusement and of art, was fully recognized as having an important place in the life of the *Nāgaraka* or art loving citizen.

Canons of Art Criticism

IN the *Vishṇudharmottara* the special ability of the artist who could paint wavy lines, flames, smoke and flags, showing the direction of the wind, is commended, and that artist is considered really great who could, in his pictures, differentiate the sleeping from the dead.

The artist in ancient India, like the poet and the musician, had elaborate canons of criticism for the understanding and appraisal of merits and defects in pictures. In the *Upamitibhavaprapañchakathā* (p. 890) there is a passage that mentions all the points that go to make up a good picture: *yāvad dṛishṭam ālikhitam ekapuṭe suvibhaktojjvalena varṇakrameṇa alakshyamāṇaistūlikāpadakairanurūpayā sūkshmarekhayā prakaṭadarśanena nimnonnatavibhāgena samuchitena bhūshaṇakalāpena suvibhaktayāvayavarachanayātivilakshaṇayā binduvartinyā abhinavasneharasotsukhatayā parasparam harshotphullabaddhadṛisṭikam samārūḍhapremātibandhuraikatayālanghitachittaniveśam vidyādharamithunakamiti.* Here is a fine drawing delicately delineated in an unobtrusive line, coloured gaily in bright tints, with relief suggested by modelling; with the element of ornamentation appropriately introduced; with symmetrical portrayal of body, emotion and joy, executed in a really admirable manner. But above all, beyond the beautifully prepared ground, the sure line, the charm of the colour and the shading suggesting depth, there is something more important that makes the picture a masterpiece, and that arrests attention, and that is the master artist's stroke: *chitrasyeva manohāri kartuḥ kim api kauśalam, Vakroktijīvita* (iii, 3, 4). Just as symmetry, foreshortening, strength in drawing, beauty in colour and other factors enhance the merits of a picture, similarly the *Vishṇudharmottara* enumerates defects, like coarse, weak and vague drawing, lack of symmetry, muddying of colours, bad pose, lack of emotion, dirty execution, lifeless portrayal and so forth.

The evocative nature of pictures adds to their charm, revealing the superior skill of the artist. The dress of a princess gives a clue to her virginity; the act of a *ṛishikumāra* suggests the time of the day, as at Mahābalipuram, where the hermit doing the *sūryopasthāna* (worship of the sun) suggests midday.

Detailed canons of art criticism, discussing such details as even the shape of hair, like *kuntala, dakshiṇāvarta*, etc., long and fine, curling to the right; the measurement of limbs in general according to *tāla* proportions (face measure); different shapes of eyes, like *chāpākāra, matsyodara*, etc., (bow-shaped, fish-shaped, etc.); poses or *sthānas*, like *ṛijvāgata*, straight, etc.; different methods of foreshortening or *kshayavṛiddhi;* the methods of shading; the modes of representing different subjects chosen for delineation, such as kings, courtiers, courtesans, warriors, animals, rivers, etc.; and several other art themes are given in the *Vishṇudharmottara*, in the *Chitrasūtra*, which was prescribed as a textbook for all artists and sculptors and all *nāgarakas* with a good general education in fine arts. It shows how greatly the science of art criticism was evolved in ancient India.

It is no wonder that under such conditions, the artist did very well. And if the ivory carvers of Vidiśā, who worked in different mediums, could, with equal facility, carve in stone, paint with a brush, and produce the Sānchi gateway, is it a wonder that the king envied them? As the early Buddhist text describes it, the king, on his elephant, passing close to where the ivory carver was working, covered all over with ivory dust, lost in his task, unconscious of the presence of the ruler in his vicinity, longed to be not a ruler in the dazzling halls of his palace, but just that wonderful creator of beautiful form in ivory.

Texts on Painting

THE texts on painting describe the technique and process of painting, the colours, the tools, the conventions and the canons of art criticism. The *Chitrasūtra* in the *Vishṇudharmottara* is the one standard text for almost the whole sub-continent. Most of the other books of the medieval period, like the *Abhilashitārthachintāmaṇi*, *Śivatatvaratnākara*, *Śilparatna*, *Nāradaśilpa*, *Sarasvatīśilpa*, *Prajāpatiśilpa*, are from South India and the painters of the region were quite familiar with them all, as the unbroken tradition that has been followed for centuries in the Deccan and the South makes clear.

The oldest text that has come down to us today is the *Chitrasūtra* in the *Vishṇudharmottara*, (6th century), which is probably the same one mentioned by Dāmodaragupta in his *Kuṭṭanīmata*, a textbook on art, studied by connoisseurs of art: *bharataviśākhiladattilavṛikshāyurveda-chitrasūtreshu patrachchhedavidhāne bhramakarmaṇi pustasūdaśāstreshu ātodyavādanavidhau nṛitte gīte cha kauśalam tasyāḥ*: *Kuṭṭanīmata* 124-125, 'she is accomplished in the texts of Bharata, Viśākhila, Dattila, horticulture, painting, paper cuts, sculpture, cookery, vocal and instrumental music and dance.' It may thus be seen that painting was one of the many arts, like music, dance, medicine, each with a standard book written on it by a famous author.

The *Vishṇudharmottara* discusses dance, music, prosody, grammar, architecture, sculpture, as well as painting. It lays great stress on the close relationship between the fine arts, like dance, music and painting.

The *Chitrasūtra* in the *Vishṇudharmottara* has indeed very important material on the classifications of pictures, painting materials, the merits and blemishes in painting and other practical hints most useful to painters. It gives a classification of paintings into natural, lyrical, sophisticated and mixed. The origin of art is attributed to the sage Nārāyaṇa who created Urvaśī, the lovely celestial nymph, by drawing a beautiful figure on his thigh. This is supposed to be the origin of drawing. Viśvakarmā learnt this skill from Nārāyaṇa and successfully interpreted the entire theme of the universe by imitating it in art.

Five types of men are mentioned: *hamsa*, *bhadra*, *mālavya*, *ruchaka* and *śaśaka*; and five corresponding types of women; varieties of hair, like *kuntala*, long and fine, *dakshiṇāvarta*, curling to the right, *taraṅga*, wavy, *vāridhārā*, straight and abundant, *jūṭāṭasara*, curled and abundant, are enumerated. Shapes of eyes are described, like *chāpākṛiti*, bowshaped, *utpalapatrābha*, of blue lotus tint, *matsyodara*, (fish-shaped), *padmapatra-nibha* (lotus petallike), and *śāṇākṛiti* (globular). Icons of gods and their characteristics are discussed. In this context the different *sthānas* or poses, like *ṛijvāgata*, *anṛiju*, *sāchīkṛita*, *sama*, *ardhavilochana*, *pārśvagata*, *parāvṛitta*, *pṛishṭhagata*, *parāvṛitta* and *samanata* are enumerated and described.

Then the principles of *kshayavṛiddhi*, or foreshortening, are explained. The text now passes on to the description of *bhittisamskāra*, or the preparation of the wall for painting. The colours, both primary and secondary, are enumerated, their preparation and application are described.

The pictures are then classified into *satya*, *vaiṇika*, *nāgara* and *miśra* (realistic, lyrical, sophisticated and mixed). *Vartana*, or shading, in a picture is then discussed under three heads: *patraja*, *raikhika* and *binduja* (cross-hatching, lines and stippling).

The merits and defects in pictures in general are then taken up and discussed. This and the subsequent exposition of the philosophy of painting, including propriety in painting, the number of *rasas* (moods) to be delineated in pictures, with illustrations for each, provide, as it were, the rhetoric of art.

The *Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra* is another book on art by the Paramārā King Bhoja, but it mainly deals with architecture. There is a small section in it on painting, especially from the point of view of *rasas* to be portrayed in pictures.

The *Abhilashitārthachintāmaṇi* (the wish fulfilling gem) by King Someśvara of the Western Chāḷukya dynasty of the 12th century has an interesting chapter on painting. The decoration of the *nāṭyamaṇḍapa* (dance hall) brings in this theme and the preparation of the wall, *bhittisamskāra*, is first taken up. *Vajralepa* (the medium) for mixing colours, is discussed next. The number of colours, the brushes, their varieties, and other art materials, like *tūlikā*, *lekhinī*, *vartikā* are mentioned.

Light and shade effects produced by colours and their combinations, application of gold, burnishing, etc., are discussed. The variety of poses, the preparation of forms of icons, varieties of picture, media like *rasikachitra* and *dhūlīchitra* (liquid and powder); types, like *bhāvachitra*, *viddhachitra* and *aviddhachitra* (moods, portraits, and fancy) are all discussed in this text.

The *Śivatatvaratnākara*, by Basappa Nāyaka of Beḍnūr, is a 17th century text which closely follows the *Abhilashitārthachintāmaṇi*.

The *Śilparatna*, a 16th century text by *Śrīkumāra*, has a section on painting entitled *Chitralakshaṇa*. Here there is a three-fold classification of *chitra*, sculpture into *chitra*, *ardhachitra* and *chitrābhāsa* (the figure in the round, in relief and painted). Five primary colours, i.e. white, yellow, red, black and blue are enumerated; also varieties of *vartikās* or brushes, varieties of pose, modes of light and shade, mixing of colours, application of gold and burnishing it, are all explained. There is also a classification of pictures into *rasachitra* and *dhūlīchitra* (liquid and powder media). This *rasa* is not the depiction of moods (*bhāvachitra*) of the *Abhilashitārthachintāmaṇi*, for *rasa*, meaning both liquid and mood here indicates the former.

The *Nāradaśilpa* has two chapters, one dealing with the *Chitraśālā* (picture gallery), etc., and the other with *chitrālaṅkṛitirachanāvidhi*, the former giving a good idea of the art galleries of ancient India and the other providing a classification of pictures, as *bhaumika*, *kuḍyaka* and *ūrdhvaka*, that is according to their position on the floor, wall and ceiling. The first corresponds to the *rasachitra* and *dhūlīchitra* of the *Abhilashitārthachintāmaṇi* which is the same as the temporary decoration on the floor, called *kolam* in the South, *rāṅgoli* in Maharashtra and *ālpanā* in Bengal. Painting on the wall is

mural decoration. The third, almost the same, is on the ceiling. The themes for pictures and their appropriate place are also discussed here.

The *Sarasvatīśilpa* is another text on painting, which gives the classification already mentioned of *chitra*, *ardhachitra* and *chitrābhāsa*. The *varṇasamskāra* or preparation of colours and the enumeration of icons or *mūrtis* and their iconography are also given.

Many texts, like the *Prajāpatiśilpa*, are now lost. Apart from all these *Śilpa* texts of painting, the most valuable references to painting are from general Sanskrit literature, where there are innumerable passages indirectly and unconsciously and, often, almost casually, referring to the methods in vogue, to the ideas in the air, but which, studied attentively, reveal much more than the special texts.

The Process of Painting

IN trying to understand the spirit of the painter in medieval South India and his technique in the creation of a painting according to tradition, as it prevailed in this part of the country, it is essential to seek information in the Sanskrit and vernacular literature of the period. Fortunately, there are passages in important books in the languages of the South on this subject.

A description of the painting process from Nannechoḍa's *Kumārasambhava* in Telugu is most interesting.* The poem is assigned to the 10th century by Manavalli Ramakrishna Kavi, to whom the world owes gratitude for the discovery and publication of this valuable manuscript for the study of Telugu literature of the pre-Nannaya age. It is probably the only book of that date. Its importance for students of art lies in the passages which describe the principles and methods of painting in medieval South India.

Nannechoḍa is quite expert in his description of details that relate to art and uses a number of art parables indicating his intimate acquaintance with the subject. Examples are the lines: ***vanneleruganga-bolune vaṭṭirāta;*** 'Can a mere scribbler know the (real artistic values of) colours', ***borapagu chitra-rūpamunu bolena satkavikāvyam immahin***; 'the composition of a bad poet is like a figure full of pores (i. e. like an ill-cast statuette)'; ***chitrarūpambunaku merungekku vidhambuna;*** 'like shine given to a picture'; ***vanamamare chitritāṭavi volen***; 'the forest stood like a painted jungle'; ***kasaṭuvova doḍasi kaḍivina-kanakampu bratimavole noppu nativamenu;*** 'the bodily lustre of the lady was like that of a golden image cleansed after its dross was rubbed off'; ***varachitravarṇasamkaramu gādu;*** 'it is not an excellent mixture of colours', ***niḍupuleka chitramu vrāya***; 'while pictures were drawn without length', i.e. without dimension, which, simply, is an expression of the attempt at the impossible like cutting the sprouts of pestles, bathing in stone, measuring moonlight, etc. That Nannechoḍa appreciated realistic representation of nature in art is clear from his verse: ***kamaniyātmakasarvalohamaṇisatkāleshṭikānirmitottamaharmyam-bula gaṇḍariñchina kapotavrātapanktul biḍālamu lolingani vānimīdikalukan langhinche gākunna dad-bhrama bainūgina balkavonḍeḍa gaḍī pārāvatānīkamul.*** 'The cat prepared itself to spring at the rows of sculptured doves on the excellent mansions built of good dark brick and (decorated with) every variety of gem and metal......' (The last line of the verse which suggests that the cat was mistaken in its notion about the birds, etc., is unintelligible and baffles translation.)

This can be compared with the verse of Māgha: ***chikramsayā kṛitrimapatripankteḥ kapotapālīshu niketanānām mārjāram apyāyataniśchalāngam yasyām janaḥ kṛitrimam eva mene***; 'there (lit. where—Dvārakā), the people mistook (lit. believed) for a figurine even the (live) cat whose body was drawn out and motionless in its anxiety to approach the row of carved birds near the dovecots of houses.'

* My attention was drawn to it by the late Veturi Prabhakara Sastri.
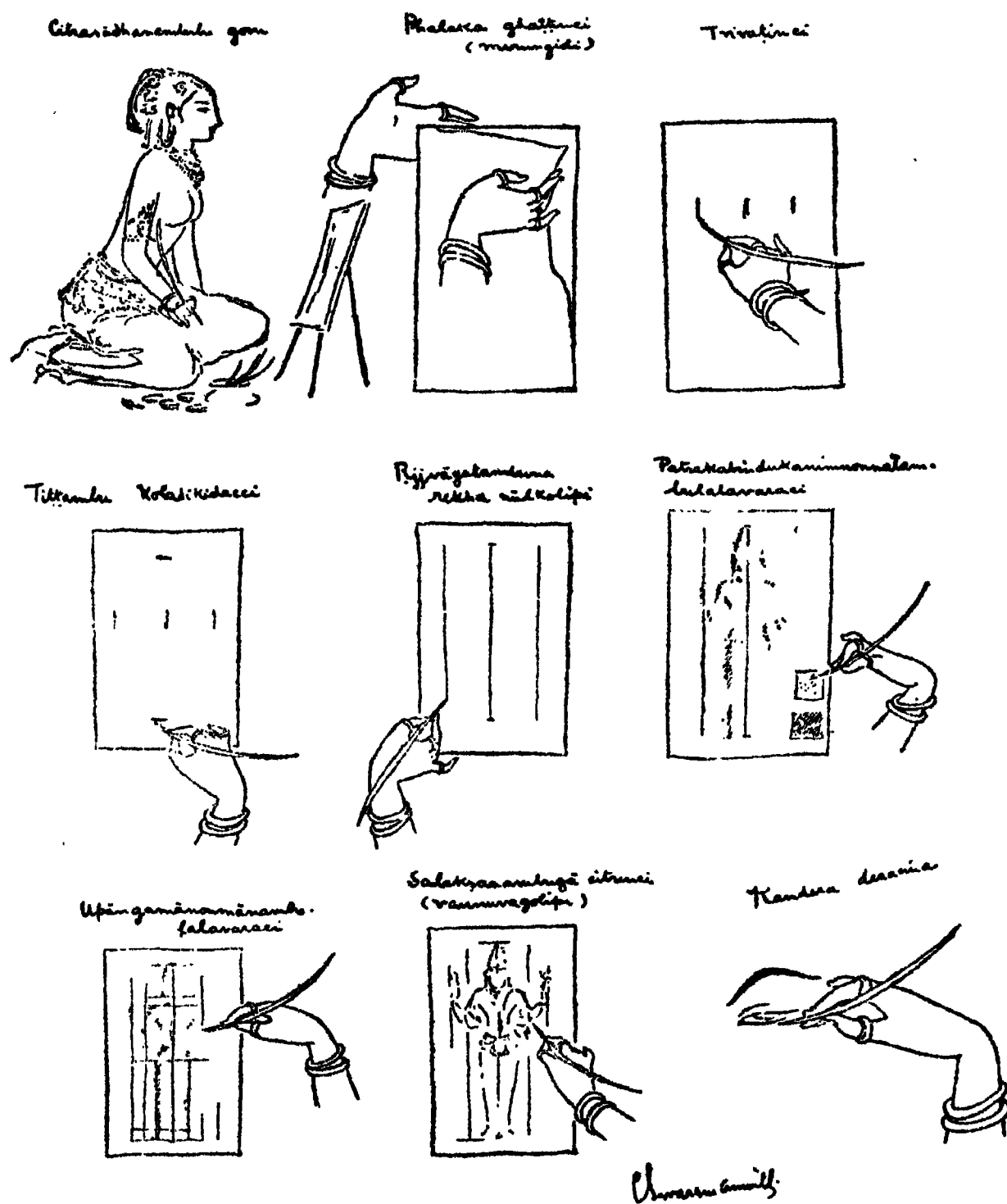
Fig. 2. The Process of painting

A complete picture of a painter at work and the various stages in the preparation of a picture (Fig. 2) is given in one passage, which, in its informative description, is unique, both in Sanskrit and Telugu: ***anta tadanusantāpambuvāpanopaka parameśvararūpu chitriñchi chūchinanaina nūraṭayagunoyani chitrasādhanambulu goni phalaka ghaṭṭiñchi meruṅgiḍi trivaṭiñchi tiṭṭambu koladiki dechchi ṛijvāgatam-***

buna rekhanūlkolipi patrakabinduka nimnonnatopāṅgamānonmānambul alavarachi salakshaṇambugā chitriñchi vannuvagolipi kandera derachina. Thus are described various stages in painting the picture, as Pārvatī tries to amuse herself by painting the form of Śiva.

The line, *chitrasādhanambulu goni,* gives what modern manuals on painting put first—the tools and materials. Then she takes the *phalaka* on which the picture is to be sketched. The words here used are *phalaka ghaṭṭiñchi.*

We are told in the *Śilpa* texts and in works of general literature that both *paṭa* and *phalaka* were used for painting. If the *phalaka* was used the *paṭa* was usually pasted on it. The so-called Tañjāvūr mode of painting is done only on boards covered with canvas and Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkshita refers to the method in the line in his *Nalacharita nāṭaka,* where he mentions *paṭa* and *phalaka* separately: *idam phalakam, esha chitrapaṭaḥ, iyam cha tūlikā, ime cha varṇasambhārāḥ,* (here is the board, this is the canvas, this is the brush and here are the colours). It is the application of the canvas to the board that is meant by the word *ghaṭṭiñchi.* The preparation of the canvas, whether pasted or not on a board, is usually described by the word *ghaṭṭana*; and Vidyāraṇya uses it in his description of the process of painting, to which he refers in his *Pañchadaśī* in the line: *yathā dhauto ghaṭṭitaścha lāñchhito rañjitaḥ paṭaḥ* 'like the canvas whitened, prepared, marked (i.e. sketched out) and coloured...'

The next process is given as *meruṅgiḍi,* which means literally, 'giving brilliance'.

This probably refers to the white ground applied to the canvas as described by the word *dhauta* in the verse of the *Pañchadaśī,* quoted above, although it may possibly be some other process by which 'brilliance' was imparted to the surface. That 'brilliance' was counted as a vital factor in a picture is indicated by such references as are found in passages in Vāmana's *Kāvyālaṅkārasūtravṛītti,* like *aujjvalyam kāntirityāhur guṇam guṇaviśāradāḥ purāṇachitrasthānīyam tena vandhyam kaver vachaḥ*; 'people who know well the merits of a work recognize the merit of brilliance as (of the nature of) lustre; the words of the poet which lack it are like an old picture' (devoid of a fresh glow of colours).

The connotation of the word '*chchhāyā*' in the verse of Rājānaka Kuntaka's *Vakroktijīvita* is not different from '*aujjvalya*'; and in the comment on it Kuntaka himself pronounces it as *chhāyā kāntiḥ: manojñaphalakollekhavarṇachchhāyāśriyaḥ pṛithak chitrasyeva manohāri kartuḥ kimapi kauśalam,* 'the capacity of a poet, which appeals to the heart of the reader, is different from the means he adopts for achieving his composition, just as the skill of a painter that captivates the heart is, in the case of a picture, different from the grandeur of excellent board, drawing, colour and brilliance...'

Rājaśekhara and many other poets are against *purāṇachchhāyā* (old, dull colour) in a picture and attach great importance to *aujjvalya.* In the line: *dhūmaśyāmapurāṇachitrarachanārūpam jagajjāyate,* 'the world appears (at sunset) like an old picture dimmed by smoke' is expressed Rājaśekhara's dislike for *purāṇachchhāyā* in a painting. The effect of '*merugu*' or gloss is clearly brought to the reader's mind by Nannechoḍa himself in another passage, where 'brilliance' in a picture is compared to the velvety colour in a tender creeper and sweet odour in a flower: *mariyun gaumārānantarambuna ledīgakun mavvambekkunaṭṭlu puvvulakun dāvi vondunaṭlu chitrarūpamunaku meruṅgekkuvidhambuna nikhilajanamanobhirāmambaguchu,* 'after (her) childhood was past (and she became a young lady), she

gladdened the hearts of people like a tender creeper putting on fresh glow, a flower acquiring odour and a picture taking brilliance'.

Pārvatī is then described as doing '*trivaṭi*'. *Trivaṭiñchi* means 'having done *trivaṭi*'; but what the term signifies is not easily made out. The word '*vaṭi*' is probably from the root '*vaṭ*' to divide, *vaṭa vibhajane*. It might then mean that three principal divisions are made. Since the figure here spoken of is Śiva in *ṛijvāgata* posture, it would mean that the three important lines—*brahmasūtra* and *bahissūtras*—are marked out; and this suggestion may be justified by the phrase *tiṭṭambu koladiki dechchi* which immediately follows *trivaṭiñchi*, as the next activity of the painter.

The marking of the principal lines that compose the figure give an idea of its general proportion. The phrase *tiṭṭambu koladiki dechchi* is thus significant, coming as it does immediately after *trivaṭiñchi*, and can be rendered as 'having adjusted the proportions to proper measurement'. Decisions regarding the proportions of individual figures in a composition which they create, or of the limbs of a particular single subject, in accordance with the laws of foreshortening and perspective—important factors in sketching—are emphasised as one of the *chitraguṇas* (merits) in the *Vishṇudharmottara* under the name *pramāṇa* (proportion). It should here be borne in mind that proportion is not symmetry. When the artist faithfully depicts the world around him as he sees it he is following proportions, without reference to symmetry. The latter is an ideal condition. Correctly mirrored on canvas and blocked out in proper proportions, the ugly one is proportionate in its 'disproportionate' proportions. But in the case of the ideal figure its proportions form symmetry. It is here and here alone that both the words mean the same thing; and it is just such a state that is emphasised by Vālmīki in the lines that describe Rāma perfectly proportioned and in perfect symmetry *samas samavibhaktāṅgaḥ* (v, 33, 16). The first word *sama* makes a positive assertion that Rāma was proportionate in form, no limb of his being an inch more or less than sufficient to make up ideal beauty. The next word *samavibhaktāṅgaḥ* states that his limbs were symmetrically separated and arranged.

The next phrase in the sentence, *ṛijjvāgatambuna nūlkolipi* gives us the exact view and posture that Pārvatī chose for sketching the figure of Śiva. *Ṛijvāgata* (straight front) is one of the postures listed in the *Chitraśāstra*, 'the most popular of all and the best described and understood'.

The different views and poses given in the *Śilpaśāstra* are an interesting subject of study and have been discussed elaborately by T. A. Gopinatha Rao in his article on *Painting in Ancient India* in the *Modern Review* (December 1918). He there translated the text of the *Śilparatna*, which describes these poses. There is no *Śilpa* text that does not mention them and they are explained at some length, with illustrations, in my article '*Artists' Jottings from the Nalachampu of Trivikrama*'. The mention of the technical term *ṛijvāgata* by the author of the *Kumārasambhava* shows us that he was quite familiar with the terminology of *Śilpins*. It should also be noted that the threefold division of the figure into the *brahmasūtra* and *bahissūtras*, suggested by the word *trivaṭiñchi*, is most significant in the case of *ṛijvāgata* where the division is of equal parts. It is made all the more clear when we consider the other words of the phrase we are discussing. The part of the phrase *rekhanūlkolipi* means 'having drawn the line, according to the actual measurements, (with the help) of the thread' 'in accordance with *ṛijvāgata*', *ṛijjvāgatambuna*. A line drawn in accordance with the *ṛijvāgata* and to follow the line of the string, i.e.

the plumb line, is naturally vertical and straight and is precisely to facilitate the artist's sketching a correct figure with symmetrical proportions. The word *nūlkolipi* is interesting as it corresponds exactly to *sūtrita* in the line: *chitrasūtritāviva tau sthitau*; 'the two were like (figures) in a picture sketched (with the help of the thread line)'.

'*Sūtrapātarekhā*' is quite familiar in literature and it has been clearly explained by the commentator of the *Naishadha*, Nārāyaṇa, on verse 34 of Canto xv in the sentence: *śilpinaścha kimapi lekhitum vardhayitum vālikhyamānasya vardhamānasya vākāravakrimaparihārāya mashīkhaṭikādyupadigdhasya sutrābhighātena rekhāpātanam kurvanti*, 'artists usually map a line with a string using chalk on carbon to avoid errors while drawing or enlarging to scale'.

There are two more stages of work described in the rather long phrase that follows: *patrakabindukanimnonnatāpāṅgamānonmānambulalavarachi*. Here the last word *alavarachi*, meaning 'having settled the measure of', is to go with both *patrakabinduka nimnonnatambulu* and *upāṅgamānonmāmbulu* separately. In the western world of painters we have *chiaroscuro*, that is gradations of light to dark in a picture in order to produce the effect of volume on the flat surface of the canvas. It is the study of values of light and dark in the case of individual pictures that is meant by the phrase *patrakabindukanimnonnatambulalavarachi*, i.e. 'having measured the heights and depths (shown by lights and shadows), results from the methods of *patraka* and *binduka*'. There are three ways of depicting light and shadow, namely *patraka*, *binduka* and *raikhika*, according to the *Vishṇudharmottara*, *tisraścha vartanāḥ proktāḥ patraraikhikabindujāḥ*: 'there are mentioned three kinds of shading: *patra*, *raikhika* and *binduja*.' These correspond approximately to cross-hatching, line shading and stippling. Though the third one is not mentioned in this passage it is nevertheless most important as the only literary reference to the different kinds of *vartana* as given in the oldest *Śilpa* work extant. It is regarding the third name that there is some difficulty, because of the corrupt nature of the text of the *Vishṇudharmottara*, and it is a great pity that this passage has not included that word.

The next stage, *upāṅgamānonmānambulalavarachi* is the measuring of the different limbs in proportion to the body, the hands and legs, for instance, in proportion to the trunk, and the fingers, etc., in conformity with the measure of the other limbs. This is the method of adjusting the height of the figure to the breadth and continuing it throughout in the case of every inch of each member of the body. This done, the picture is fixed in its proportion throughout and all that remains to be done is a neat sketch of the figure, and Pārvatī is described next carrying out this process.

The phrase *salakshaṇambuga chitriñchi* shows that Pārvatī, now that the proportions are fixed and tonal values arranged, draws the strong outline. Since the light values were already set we have to presume that Pārvatī actually indicated lights and shadows on the canvas with colours, which she is described as using next, in the phrase, *vannuva golipi*, 'having coloured'.

After describing all these stages of the work the '*unmīlana*', 'opening of the eyes of the figure' was next done. This, as we indicated earlier, is an actual practice to this day by the traditional *Śilpins*, as the final touch to a figure. Though the term '*unmīlana*' is used a number of times in literary works it is not so clearly given elsewhere as in the *Haravijaya* of Ratnākara: *yasyābhiyātibhvaneshvasamāpta-*

chitrasambhārabhittipurushā malinībhavantaḥ unmīlanāvasaraśūnyadṛiśas samiddhām dadhyurdivāni-śamiva śriyam avyavasthām, 'in the mansions of his enemies the figures painted on the walls, being left dust-ridden in a half-finished stage, and therefore with their eyes not painted yet (no life being infused into them by the indication of the pupils, etc.), took Lakshmī (prosperity) to be ephemeral just like the night and day'.

Thus the 'opening of the eyes', is the last step in infusing life into a painting, *kandera derachina*. The whole passage from Nannechoḍa not only gives insight into the painter's techniques but also confirms some statements of the *Śilpa* texts by making use of the same terms and introduces some new terms, like *trivaṭiñchi*.

Fig. 3. Princely group, 2nd century B.C., Cave 10, Ajaṇṭā

Sātavāhana

2nd century B.C.—2nd century A. D.

THE early history of South India is somewhat obscure before the time of the Mauryas, whose large empire extended over a good portion of the southern region also, though independent kingdoms existed in the extreme south as friendly neighbours. Chandragupta's empire, undoubtedly the largest in all Indian history, probably included more of the South than did any later empire. As an empire that extended from the North to the South, it gave some unity and homogeneity to the vast sub-continent. Aśoka's edicts show his friendly relationship with the Cheras and Pāṇḍyas. His approach towards neighbouring kingdoms was based on friendship and not on subjugation and aggrandisement. This fostered greater cultural, moral and spiritual unity than any battle and power could have achieved.

With the break-up of the Mauryan empire about 200 B.C., the Sātavāhanas established themselves as supreme rulers in the South, as did the Śuṅgas in the North, and the Chedis in Kaliṅga. The Sātavāhana dynasty had a huge empire extending over the whole of the Deccan and the South, from sea to sea. They had their original capital at Pratishṭhāna in the West and another in the East near the mouth of the Kṛishṇā, at Dhānyakaṭa. The power and pomp of the early Sātavāhanas can be imagined from

the Nānāghāṭ Cave inscription. Śātakarṇi is there described as performing several sacrifices and making gifts of huge treasures, which only an empire of unlimited resources could have afforded.

The Sātavāhana emperors were great patrons of art and literature. Guṇāḍhya, the author of the renowned *Bṛihatkathā*, was a contemporary of one of the early Sātavāhana kings. Hāla, the Sātavāhana sovereign, was the gifted poet, who created that gem of poetry in Prākṛit, *Gāthāsaptaśatī*, which Bāṇa praised: *avināśinam agrāmyam akarot sātavāhanaḥ*, 'Sātavāhana wrote an immortal classic work'. The eastern gateway of Sānchī is lasting testimony to the taste of the Sātavāhana sovereign whose carvers fashioned it. As they were ivory carvers from Vidiśā, capable of very delicate work, this great delicacy is reflected in their stone carving also. Early Caves in Western India, such as those at Bhājā and Bedsa, have magnificent carvings illustrating early Sātavāhana art. The Nānāghāṭ Cave inscriptions refer to carved portraits, now lost.

The early phase of this art in the East is represented at Amarāvatī, in the sculptures of the first period, at Jaggayyapeṭa and at other places. The most charming phase of Sātavāhana art is the third, or 'rail period', at Amarāvatī, which a connoisseur can never forget. The ruler at this period was Vāsishṭhīputra Puḷumāvi, the son of the famous Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi. A graphic portrait in words

Fig. 4. Turban and feminine hair-style at Ajaṇṭā, Bhārhut and Amarāvatī

Fig. 5. The Queen fainting, Chhaddanta Jātaka, 2nd century B.C., Cave 10, Ajaṇṭā, after Yazdani

is given by his sorrowing mother, Bala Siri, recalling her son's worthy qualities as a man, king and connoisseur.

To understand the painting of this period there are, fortunately for the study of South Indian art in the Deccan, a few fragments left (Fig. 3) though in bad condition, in Caves 9 and 10 at Ajaṇṭā, the only surviving examples for study of very early Indian art.

It is interesting to study in these paintings the form, features, poses, ornamentation, dress, furniture, architectural setting, and other details corresponding closely, as one might expect, with sculpture of the period. Turbans of great variety, as in sculpture at Amarāvatī, the Bhājā Cave, Sānchī, Kārlā, are represented in the paintings in Caves 9 and 10 at Ajaṇṭā. The feminine figures here are almost exact replicas of those with which we are familiar in early sculpture of the period (Fig. 4). Even the beautiful jewelled strip along the combed hair and the circular *chaṭulātilaka* gem, running over the parting of the hair to rest on the forehead, is exactly as in sculpture recalling Bāṇa's description: *lalāṭalāsakasya sīmantachumbinaśchaṭulātilakamaṇerudañchatā chaṭulenāmśujālena raktāmśukeneva kṛitaśirovaguṇṭhanā*, (*Harshacharita*, *p*. 32). The *phalakahāra* and the *ekāvali* invite our attention. The heavy anklets are similar to those in sculpture. The elaborate *mekhalā* or the girdle and the *nīvī* knot of the clothing, recall the sculptor's version at Amarāvatī or Kārlā. The fan-shaped coiffure in Amarāvatī and Sānchī has its parallel here. The treatment of the tree, in the adoration of the *Bodhi* tree in Cave 10, resembles similar representation on the Sānchī *toraṇa* architrave, where it is the object of worship.

In this theme of the adoration of the *Bodhi* tree there is a delightful group of maidens engaged in music and dance. This musical scene, along with those from Bhārhut and from Amarāvatī, con-

stitutes a very precious visual document of orchestral detail. There are three dancers, as in the Amarāvatī medallion of the 'rail period' in the British Museum—a harpist, three women keeping time—one with the flute and another with a pipe.

There is a certain convention in the treatment of themes, and some of the chosen poses must necessarily, according to the pattern set by the original master sculptor, be identical. The fainting of the queen at the sight of the tusks of the magnanimous Chhaddanta, as depicted in the painting in Cave 10 (Fig. 5), is a type, that survives two centuries later at Golī, near the mouth of the Kṛishṇā. This indicates the wide influence of this school of art, which transcended individual sculptors and remained a type of extraordinary vitality, extending throughout the empire. Three centuries later, at Ajaṇṭā, the fainting princess is depicted in almost identical fashion, illustrating the persistence of traditions.

Most of this painting is unfortunately so completely scribbled over and damaged by vandals that the outlines are clearer than the painting. A fragment of the painting in colour, and the drawings of two of the themes, here given, represent the earliest phase, not only of the Sātavāhana painting in the second-first centuries B.C., but early Indian painting in general.

Cave 9 is a *chaitya* hall with a fine façade, nave, apse and aisles composed by a colonnade of pillars running the entire length of the nave. At the apsidal end is a votive *stūpa*. The pillars have the characteristics of the 2nd century B.C. There are two layers of painting here, the earlier, contemporary with the structure, and the later, of the 5th century A.D.

Cave 10 is a still earlier *chaitya* hall. The votive *stūpa* is in the apse. This cave has an inscription in Brāhmī letters of the 2nd century B.C. mentioning one Vāsiṭhīputa Kaṭahadi as the donor of the façade. The worship of the *Bodhi* tree, the *Sāma* and *Chhaddanta jātakas* are here graphically represented, though unfortunately now very much mutilated.

The *Sāma jātaka* is the story of the Bodhisattva Sāma who supported his blind parents living as hermits in the forest. When filling his pot with water from the river, the boy was inadvertently shot by the king of Banaras who was hunting in the forest. The king realised too late the disaster and, told by the dying Sāma of his helpless parents, he offered himself to them to take the place of their beloved son. Moved by the intense sorrow of the helpless parents a goddess restored to them not only their sight but also their son. The painting here shows the hunter-king, the sorrowing parents, Sāma, pierced by the arrow, and then restored to life.

The *Chhaddanta jātaka*, one of the most popular stories reproduced in Buddhist monuments, is often repeated. The Bodhisattva born as a noble elephant, leader of the herd, lived in royal glory with his two consorts—Mahāsubhaddā and Chullasubhaddā in a lotus lake near the Himalayas. Chullasubhaddā envied Mahāsubhaddā, the favourite, and died despondent. She was born again as the queen of Banaras, and, remembering her former birth, sought revenge on Chhaddanta. She pretended to be ill and demanded as cure the tusks of Chhaddanta. A hunter, Sonuttara, undertook this mission of obtaining the tusks and wounded the noble animal. Chhaddanta not only forgave him, but also willingly presented him with his tusks. A poignant touch here is that the animal himself cut off his tusks,

as the hunter found it difficult to do so. At the sight of the tusks the queen was filled with remorse, fainted and died.

The painting here gives a pleasant picture of the life of the elephant and his consorts in the lotus lake, near the huge banyan tree, the queen's illness, the hunter sent to fetch the tusks, the presentation of the cut tusks to the queen and her fainting at the sight.

The fragments of painting discovered by Professor Jouveau Dubreuil in the Bedsa Cave resemble these early Sātavāhana examples, but represent the late phase, toward the end of the second century A.D. The feminine figure here is very delicately portrayed in the best traditions of the fourth period of Amarāvatī. She wears an *ekāvali*, and stands in graceful flexion, recalling similar carvings from Amarāvatī and Kārlā. It at once brings to mind the maiden in the lotus pool from Dandan-Oiliq, in Chinese Turkistan, where Indian art styles spread early in the Christian era.

Another recent discovery of painting of the late Sātavāhana period, in the Chitya Cave 3 of the Tuljā Leṇa group at Junnār, represents a beautiful standing feminine figure painted on a pillar. There is great restraint in ornamentation and the painting bespeaks the fine taste of the painter.

Fig. 6. View of Ajaṇṭā Caves

Vākāṭaka

4th-6th centuries A.D.

THE first mention of the Vākāṭakas is in the Kṛishṇā valley in inscriptions of the fourth period of art at Amarāvatī (2nd century A.D.). These are inscriptions in florid script closely resembling those of the Ikshvākus, successors of the Sātavāhanas in the Kṛishṇā valley. The Vākāṭakas appear to have migrated from the Kṛishṇā valley to establish a kingdom there that slowly grew powerful in the Deccan. At the height of their power the Vākāṭakas were the imperial successors of the Sātavāhanas in the Deccan and had matrimonial alliances with the Bhāraśivas and the Guptas.

Vindhyaśakti and his powerful son, Pravarasena I, are great early rulers of the dynasty. Two branches of the royal house of the Vākāṭakas are known, the main branch from Gautamīputra and the Vatsagulma branch from Sarvasena. The devout king Pṛithvīsheṇa's son, Rudrasena II, of the main line, married Prabhāvatī Gupta, daughter of Chandragupta II, and she was paramount ruler during the minority of her son Divākarasena. Pravarasena II was also her son and during his rule a princess of the Kuntala house was married to his son, Narendrasena. Of the other branch, Sarvasena's son, Vindhyaśakti triumphed over Kuntala and was succeeded by his son, Pravarasena II, to be distinguished from his namesake in the main line. His grandson Devasena had a very powerful son, Harisheṇa, who was the most important sovereign of his time and was a contemporary of Narendrasena of the main line. The Vākāṭaka ruler, Pravarasena II of the main line, is very well known for his literary talent and appreciation of poetry; *kīrtiḥ pravarasenasya prayātā kumudojvalā sāgarasya param pāram kapiseneva setunā* (*Harshacharita* i), 'the fame of Pravarasena, shining like the lily, has crossed the ocean like the

monkey army', as Bāṇa puts it. He was also a patron of the arts in all forms. Some of the caves at Ajaṇṭā have inscriptions of the Vākāṭaka period and can be definitely dated and attributed to the time of the rulers of this dynasty.

Ajaṇṭā (Fig. 6) was in the domain of the powerful collateral branch of the Vākāṭakas, where the Gupta influence had no place, especially under the powerful Harisheṇa. The paintings at Ajaṇṭā of this period constitute an immense display of Vākāṭaka art. To see here the influence of the Gupta painter, unknown except for the fragments of painting at Bagh, is fantastic. As Barrett clearly points out, Vākāṭaka painting is only a continuation of the earlier Sātavāhana tradition.

The early caves at Ajaṇṭā exhibit architectural features of the early Sātavāhana period, while the caves of the Vākāṭakas are very elaborate and developed. The *chaitya* window type and sculptural adornment, even the *uddeśika stūpa* in the *chaitya*, with human representation of the Master on the sides, in the later caves, all differ from those in the simpler, earlier caves. These have façade decoration, with railing, *chaitya* window pattern, and *uddeśika stūpa*, devoid of any human depiction of Buddha, because such representation was then considered disrespectful.

These caves show the height of perfection of the Vākāṭakas' art, and no other examples are needed for the study of their art in the Deccan, contemporary with Gupta art in the North.

The paintings entirely cover the walls, pillars and ceilings at Ajaṇṭā, and form a great gallery of masterpieces of Buddhist art, illustrating scenes from the life of Buddha, from his previous lives, composing the *jātakas* and *avadānas*, and also floral and animal motifs, beautifully woven into diverse designs of striking originality.

In Cave 16, there is an inscription which describes its dedication to the monks by Varāhadeva, the minister of the Vākāṭaka king Harisheṇa, in the latter half of the 5th century A.D. Another inscription, in Cave 26, mentions the gift of the temple of Sugata by the monk, Buddhabhadra, a friend of Bhāvirāja, the minister of the king of Aśmaka. Its date, judging from the palaeography, may also be the same. Of the same date is another fragmentary inscription in Cave 20 recording the gift of the hall by Upendra. All these inscriptions are in the box-headed letters of the Vākāṭakas and clearly indicate their date. This art is thus a distinct Vākāṭaka phase at Ajaṇṭā like the earlier phase which represents the art of the Sātavāhanas.

The technique of painting at Ajaṇṭā is tempera. The materials used are very simple. Here are found all the five colours usually described in every *śilpa* text—red ochre, yellow ochre, lamp black, lapis lazuli and white. The surface of the rock received first a coating of clay mixed with rice husk and gum. On this layer a coat of lime was applied, well smoothed and polished. On this ground, the compositions were painted. The outline was dark brown or black. Colours were added subsequently. Effects of light and shade were created by the method of lines and dots, illustrating the mode of *binduja* and *patravartana*, the stippling and hatching described in *śilpa* texts. The lines portraying figures at Ajaṇṭā are so sure, sinuous, suggesting form and depth, that we at once recall the reference appreciating effective sketching in the *Viddhasālabhañjikā: api laghu likhiteyam dṛiśyate pūrṇamūrtiḥ*, where, with the minimum of drawing, the maximum effect of full form is produced. The masters at Ajaṇṭā have
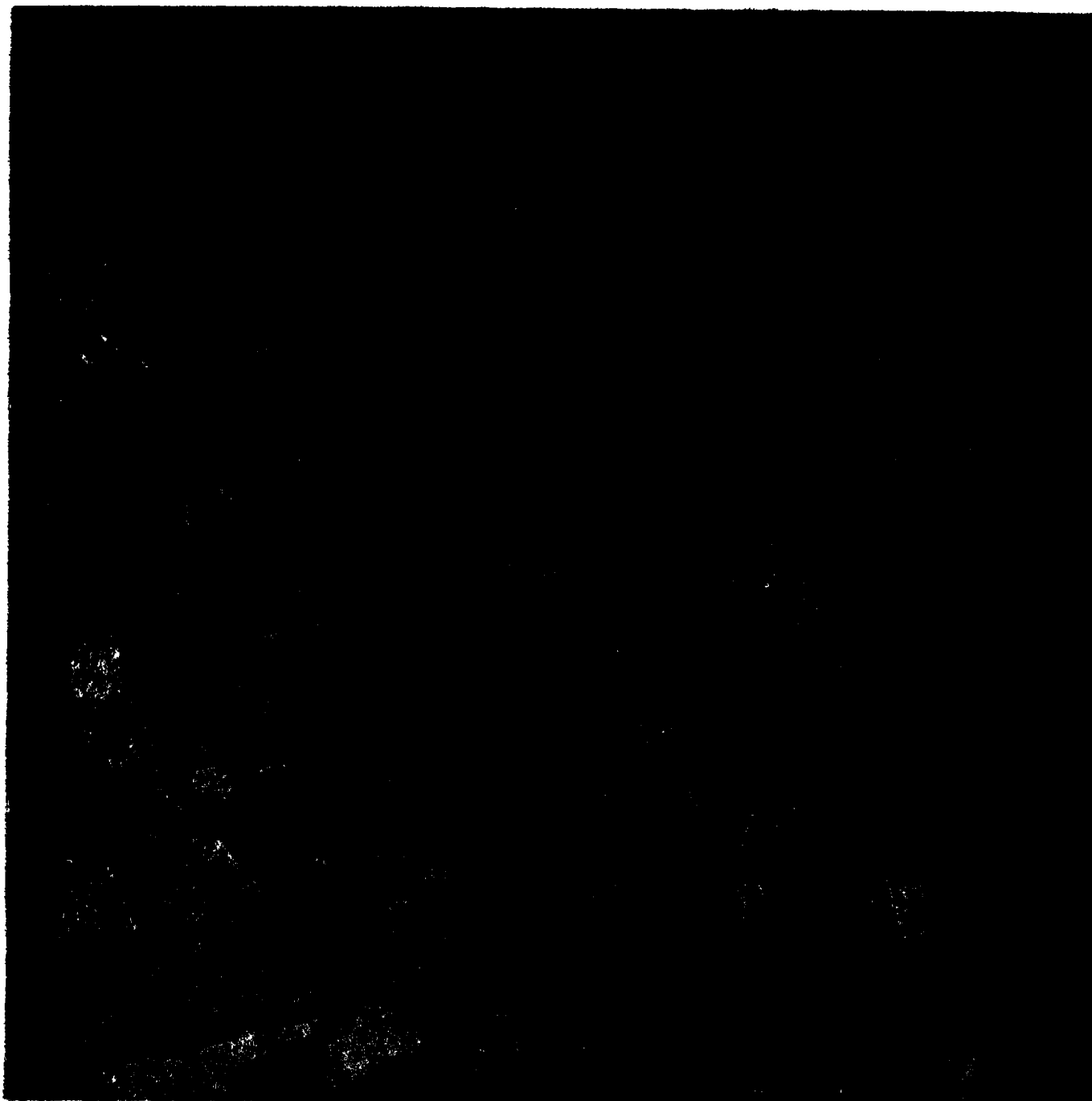
Fig. 7. Lovers, 6th century, Ajaṇṭā, Courtesy of SKIRA

demonstrated the excellence of line drawing as given in the *Vishṇudharmottara:— rekhām praśamsantyāchāryāḥ*, 'the masters praise effective line drawing'.

The Vākāṭaka painter has studied nature around him and seen great beauty with intense sympathy. Plant and animal life have absorbed his interest. He has bestowed tender affection on themes of flora and fauna wherever he could depict them. The geese in the *Hamsa Jātaka* and the deer in the *Miga Jātaka*, both from Cave 17, are examples of the painter's sensitive approach

Fig. 8. Kaṇṭhāślesha (neck-embrace), 5th century, Ajaṇṭā

to the theme of animals and birds. He has been at home equally in the royal court, representing with great vivacity its dazzling magnificence, in the simplicity of a rural setting and in the serene beauty of the hermit's life in sylvan surroundings. The *Vessantara jātaka* shows the munificence of the prince, and the poor Brahmin, appearing as a beggar. The scene of prince Vessantara with his consort in the chariot on the royal high road, portraying various merchants plying their trade, in Cave 27, is a strikingly beautiful picture of urban life in ancient India. The landing in Ceylon is a magnificent representation of royal glory, in Cave 17. The interior of the palace, giving a glimpse of the king and queen in the harem, or in the garden, indicates that nothing was hidden from the gaze of the court painter. The painter could be graphic in his portrayal, of 'a loving royal couple, the princess resting shyly almost in the lap of her lover' (Fig. 7), as Kālidāsa has described them in his lines: *tām aṅkam āropya kṛiśāṅgayashṭim varṇāntarākrāntapayodharāgrām vilajjamānām rahasi pratītaḥ paprachchha rāmām rāmāṇobhilāsham, Raghuvamśa* (xiv, 27) or *asyāṅkalakshmīrbhava dīrghībāhoḥ, Raghuvamśa* (vi, 43). He could present the charm of a darting glance, or the close embrace, the neck, entwined by the arm (Fig. 8), recalling the line of the *Meghadūta: Kaṇṭhāśleshapraṇayini jane kim punardūrasamsthe* (i, 3) or that of the *Kuṭṭanīmata*, which describes the beautiful eye of a lovely damsel as the abode of Manmatha: *sa jayati saṅkalpabhavo ratimukhaśatapatrachumbanabhramaraḥ yasyānukūlalalanānayanāntavilokanam vasatiḥ* (*Kuṭṭanīmata*), 'victorious is Love who is the bee on the lotus-face of Rati and whose abode is the side-long glance of the beloved'. The toilet of the princess depicts a similar theme. There are probably no better examples than the divine musicians floating in the air, from Cave 17, to illustrate the imagination of the painter in portraying the glory of the celestials (Fig. 11). The gay theme of *dampati*, or loving couples, has splendid representation at Ajaṇṭā; a whole row is just above the entrance doorway of Cave 17. Here the versatility of the Vākāṭaka painter created diverse poses for several seated *dampatis*. *Māradharshaṇa*, in Cave 1,

Fig. 9. Echoes of Amarāvatī in Ajaṇṭā

Buddha's descent at Sankisa, in Cave 17, and also prince Siddhārtha and Yaśodharā, in Cave 1, are magnificent representations of the Master in different attitudes by painters whose art could match such noble themes. The long panels and borders, from the ceilings, of swans and birds, Vidyādhara couples, auspicious conches and lotuses as sinuous rhizomes, and stalks with lotuses in bud, and bloom, and leaves covering large areas in artistic sweeps reveal the capacity of the artist to create diverse artistic patterns.

Reminders of sculptural forms from Amarāvatī, in the painted figures at Ajaṇṭā (Fig. 9), indicate that the Vākāṭaka traditions are derived from earlier Sātavāhana sources. It is only the decorative element, chiefly composed of pearls and ribbons, especially characteristic of the Gupta-Vākāṭaka age, that distinguishes them from the simpler art of the Sātavāhanas.

It is interesting again to see how Vākāṭaka traditions continued in later sculpture. Figures in identical poses, found at Mahābalipuram, recalling those at Ajaṇṭā, point to a common source in earlier ones from Amarāvatī (Fig. 10). The identical study of the right leg put forward in exactly the same pose, at Ajaṇṭā and at Mahābalipuram, cannot escape attention. The beautiful paintings in colours at Ajaṇṭā help us to better comprehend the glory of earlier Amarāvatī sculpture and the
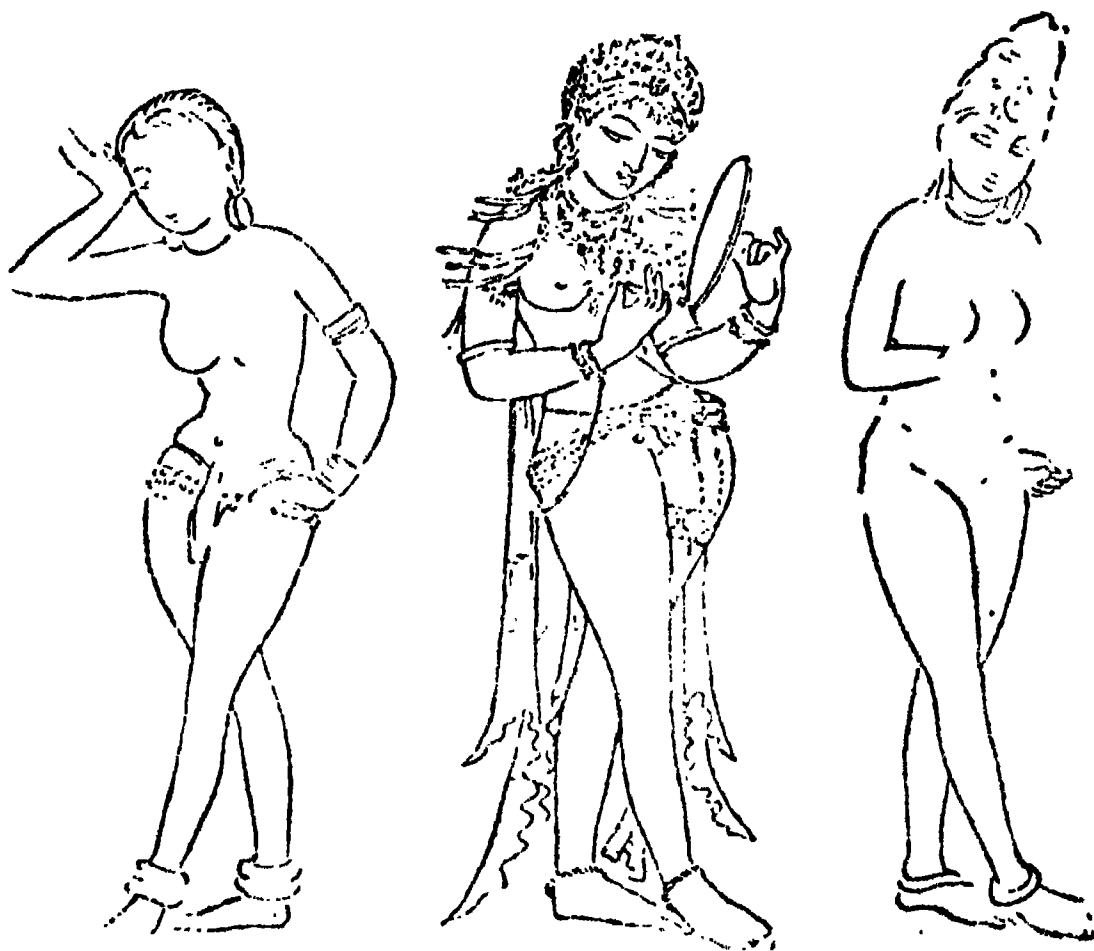
Fig. 10. Echoes of Amarāvatī in Ajaṇṭā and Mahābalipuram.
Left to right: Amarāvatī, Ajaṇṭā and Mahābalipuram

Fig. 11. Flying celestials, Ajaṇṭā

culture represented by it, where the lack of colour denies comprehension of the rich furniture, imposing architecture and pageantry.

These paintings at Ajaṇṭā provide excellent illustration of the six limbs of painting, *Shaḍaṅga*, as it is called in the *Jayamaṅgala* commentary on Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra*. They are composed of *rūpabheda*, variety of form; *pramāṇa*, proper proportion; *bhāva*, depiction of emotion; *lāvaṇyayojanā*, infusion of grace; *śādriśya*, likeness; and *varṇikābhaṅga;* mixing of colours to produce an effect of modelling. The 'diversity of form' at Ajaṇṭā is indeed overwhelming. The painters here mastered the vast complex of human, animal and plant forms in endless detail. In addition, they gave scope to their creative imagination for abundant design. The master at Ajaṇṭā has control, not only over individual figures but he also creates groups and he has produced splendid compositions. 'Emotion' is best depicted while narrating the scenes from legends. The grace in some of the figures illustrates *lāvaṇyayojanā*. Where figures are repeated, as in the *Vessantara jātaka*, the element of likeness is clearly shown and *śādriśya* is very obvious. The painter's mastery of colour helps us to appreciate his capacity in *varṇikābhaṅga*.

As narrators of the legend, the painter as well as the sculptor at Ajaṇṭā, as in other monuments, occasionally have deviated from the normal forms but always the effect has been heightened.

The representation of Irandatī on a swing, a special feature in this depiction of the *Vidhurapaṇḍita jātaka*, enhances the charm of the Nāga princess, whose beauty made the Yaksha Punnaka play a game of dice, win, and bring the wise Vidhurapaṇḍita to the palace of the Nāga queen in order to wed her. The episode is depicted here more effectively than even at Bhārhut, Amarāvatī or Borobudur.

The version of the *Chhaddanta jātaka* at Ajaṇṭā heightens the pathos by the noble act of the elephant, who not only offered his tusks to the wicked hunter, as is usually shown, but also helped him in sawing them off. This version is from the early Sātavāhana series in Cave 10, and probably the Vākāṭaka painter followed this earlier tradition, deviating from the usual sculptural representation in order likewise to produce a greater effect.

In Ajaṇṭā the *jātakas*, which frequently provide the subject matter of paintings, as well as scenes from the Buddha's life, are treated by the painter with great originality, and seem to provide new detail and a fresh approach to episodes long familiar in sculptures.

The *Hamsa jātaka* is more vivid than at Amarāvatī; the *Vessantara jātaka*, the best narration, excelling even that at Golī or at Sānchī; the *Mātiposaka jātaka* is elaborate and different from the simple, single scene at Golī.

The *Sāma jātaka*, the *Mahākapi jātaka* or *Sarabhamiga jātaka* are more satisfactory than anywhere else, while the *Mahisha jātaka*, represented at Borobudur, finds its only known Indian version here. The *Valahassa jātaka*, following the *Divyāvadāna* story, is more detailed than that on the Kushan rail pillar.

The *Sibi jātaka* at Ajaṇṭā presents a different version from Kshemendra's in the *Avadānakalpalatā*, of which the earlier source, now lost, inspired the carvings at Amarāvatī, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa and other places.

Similarly in scenes from the Buddha's life, like the story of Nalagiri and the presentation of Rāhula to Buddha at Ajaṇṭā, the painter excells the sculptor, with perhaps an exception for the medallion of the latter motif in the British Museum.

Paintings of the Buddha's life in Cave 1 are of fine quality. The *jātakas* depicted—*Sibi jātaka, Śaṅkhapāla jātaka, Māhājanaka jātaka* and *Champeyya jātaka*—are also excellently painted. (See notes 'A' & 'B' on Cave 1, p. 51).

Cave 2, in addition to the large-sized painting of the Boddhisattva, the dream of Māyā, and its interpretation, the descent from heaven, the birth and the seven steps, depicts the *Hamsa jātaka, Vidhurapaṇḍita jātaka, Ruru jātaka* and *Pūrṇa avadāna*. There are also to be noted fragments of painted inscriptions about the donation of a 'thousand painted Buddhas' and some verses from the *Kshānti jātaka* of the *Jātakamālā*. (See note on Cave 2, p. 51).

Cave 16, a *vihāra*, was beautifully painted, and according to an inscription was dedicated by Varāhadeva, the minister of the Vākāṭaka king, Harisheṇa (end of the 5th century A.D.). This inscription describes it as adorned with windows, doors, beautiful picture galleries (*vīthīs*), carvings of celestial nymphs, ornamental pillars and stairs and a shrine (*chaitya mandira*) and a large reservoir: (*gavākshaniryūhasuvīthivedikāsurendrakanyāpratimādyalaṅkṛitam, manoharastambhavibhaṅga ...... rachaityamandiram, ma......talasannivishṭam visa......namanobhirāmam, va......nchambumahānidhānam nāgendraveśmādibhir apyalamkṛitam*).

The paintings here represent stories of Buddha's life and the *Hasti jātaka, Mahāummagga jātaka* and *Sutasoma jātaka*. (See note on Cave 16, p. 52).

Cave 17, excavated by a feudatory of the Vākāṭaka king, Harisheṇa, as given in an inscription incised on the wall of the verandah, has an elaborately carved doorway with fine floral designs. The Gaṅgā and Yamunā figures on the door jambs are handsome.

Among the masterpieces of painting here are the seven earlier Buddhas, scenes from Buddha's life and the *Chhaddanta jātaka, Mahākapi jātaka* I and II, *Hasti jātaka, Hamsa jātaka, Sarabhamiga jātaka, Machchha jātaka, Mātiposaka jātaka, Sāma jātaka, Mahisha jātaka*, and the story of Siṃhala, from *Divyāvadāna*, with details from the *Valahassa jātaka, Sibi jātaka, Ruru jātaka* and *Nigrodhamiga jātaka*. (See note on Cave 17, p. 52).

Cave 18 likewise has paintings, panels representing Buddha, with his begging bowl, before his son, Rāhula, and Yaśodharā.

Note on Cave 1 'A'

Scenes of Buddha's life: A large panel shows prince Siddhārtha and Yaśodharā, another the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, Māradharshaṇa, the miracle of Śrāvastī and the story of Nanda.

The Māradharshaṇa incident shows the Master under the Bodhi tree, determined to be the Enlightened One, rejecting the temptation of Māra and his beautiful daughters, and seated unmoved, although attacked by the mighty hosts of his opponent.

The miracle of Śrāvastī shows Buddha appearing simultaneously in innumerable forms before a large gathering, including the king, Prasenajit. This was to confuse the heretics.

The story of Nanda shows how he was converted, though unwilling, by Buddha. Nanda still longs for his tear-eyed, beautiful wife, Sundarī, who pined for him in her palace. The painting here gives a picture of Sundarī beside the main theme.

Note on Cave 1 'B'

The *Jātakas: Sibi jātaka* narrates how the Bodhisattva offered his own flesh to a hawk to protect a pigeon that it was chasing. The *Sankhapāla jātaka* is the story of a Nāga prince who patiently allowed himself to be worried by a group of wicked men and, rescued by a merciful passer-by, gratefully took the latter to his magnificent underground abode and entertained him there. The painting depicts both the happy situation of the Nāga king and his gratitude to his benefactor.

The *Mahājanaka jātaka* depicts the story of Mahājanaka who married princess Sivālī and in spite of her attempts to retain him in worldly pleasures, made up his mind to be an ascetic, resulting in Sivālī following her husband's example.

The *Champeyya Jātaka* is the story of the Bodhisattva, born as a Nāga prince, Champeyya, who allowed himself to be caught by a snake charmer and was rescued by his queen, Sumanā, who requested the king of Banaras to intercede in his behalf.

Note on Cave 2

The *Hamsa jātaka* relates the story of the queen, Khemā, who dreamt of a golden goose discoursing to her on the law. She prevailed on her husband, the king, to have the golden goose and his companion caught and brought to her to discourse to her on the law. The painting shows the golden goose enthroned and admonishing the queen. Earlier the capture of the bird by the fowler is shown. The lotus lake, the abode of the golden goose, is picturesquely portrayed.

The *Vidhurapaṇḍita jātaka* is the story of the Nāga queen who desired to listen to the learned discourse of Vidhurapaṇḍita, the wise minister of the king of Indraprastha. The story goes that the beautiful Nāga princess Irandatī was promised in marriage to whomsoever brought the heart of Vidhurapaṇḍita to the queen. The Yaksha, Punnaka, won Vidhurapaṇḍita, as a stake, by defeating his royal master in a game of dice, brought him to the Nāga queen, and thus won the hand of the Nāga princess. The story is elaborately shown here, representing the beautiful princess, Irandatī, on a swing, the game of

dice, Vidhurapaṇḍita's discourse in the Nāga palace and the happy union of Punnaka and Irandatī.

The *Ruru jātaka* is the story of the kind-hearted golden deer that saved a man from getting drowned. The latter, however, was ungrateful and betrayed the animal to the king. The golden deer discoursed to the ruler and his queen, forgave the ungrateful man and delivered his message of *dharma* to the world. The painting depicts the deer rescuing the drowning man.

The *Pūrṇāvadāna* is the story from the *Divyāvadāna* of the conversion of Pūrṇa by Buddha and the miraculous rescue of his brother, Bhavila.

The *Kshānti jātaka* is the story of a prince who was patience incarnate and put up with all the persecution he was subjected to by the king of Banaras.

Note on Cave 16

Scenes from Buddha's life: Nanda, the miracle of Srāvastī, Sujātā's offering, the incident of Trapusha and Bhallika, the incident of the ploughing festival, the visit of Asita, the prince at school, and the dream of Māyā.

The story of Nanda here pertains to his conversion. Buddha, when he returned to Kapilavastu, visited the palace of Nanda, who was then helping his beautiful wife, Sundarī, at her toilet. Nanda rose to receive the Master, was given the begging bowl and made to follow Buddha to the monastery, where he was converted against his will. To make Nanda steadfast in his vows as a monk, Buddha showed him beautiful divine nymphs in heaven where he conducted him and promised them to him if he were true to his monkhood. Nanda soon became a devoted monk and realising the truth of religious life, thought no more of the heavenly nymphs. The scenes here depict Nanda's conversion and his journey to heaven with Buddha to see the celestial nymphs. This is comparable to sculptural presentation of the same theme at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa.

Jātakas: The *Hasti jātaka* from the *Jātakamālā* is the story of a noble elephant who killed himself by falling from a great height to feed a number of hunger-stricken animals. The *Mahāummagga jātaka* is a very lengthy one from which an episode is chosen here for depiction. It is the riddle of the 'son'. Mahosada acted as judge to settle the dispute between an ogress and the real mother of the child, as both claimed the little one as their own. Mahosada asked them both to pull the child and discovered the real mother in the one who readily gave in when she could not bear to see the child experiencing such severe pain on her account. Other riddles, like that of the 'chariot' and of the 'cotton thread' from the same story, are narrated further on.

The *Sutasoma jātaka*, also from the *Jātakamālā*, narrates how a lioness was infatuated with a charming prince, Sudāsa, who came to hunt in the forest. By licking the feet of the sleeping prince she conceived of a child, which later became a cannibal prince and was finally converted by a prince, Sutasoma. The painting here depicts the lioness licking the feet of the slumbering prince.

Note on Cave 17

The seven Buddhas are Vipaśyī, Śikhī, Viśvabhū, Krakuchchhanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa,

and Śākyamuni. Represented as well are Maitreya, the Buddha to come, the subjugation of Nalagiri, the descent at Sankisa, the miracle of Śrāvastī and the meeting of Rāhula.

Jātakas: The *Vessantara jātaka* has the story of the noble prince who never stinted giving anything begged of him and who gave away even the precious elephant responsible for the prosperity of his realm, which caused his banishment from his own kingdom along with his wife and children. Later he gave away everything, and even his wife. The panels here show the banishment; Vessantara leaving the city in his chariot; his life in the forest; his gift of his children to a wicked Brahmin, Jūjuka; the restoration of the children to their grand-father and the happy return of the prince and princess.

The *Mahākapi jātaka* I is the story of the Bodhisattva, born as a leader of a troop of monkeys, which once, while tasting sweet mangoes on the banks of the river, was suddenly attacked by the archers of King Brahmadatta of Banaras. To save the animals the Bodhisattva readily stretched out a bamboo to form a bridge to help them to cross over, and finding it slightly short, stretched his own body to complete the bridge. The king was touched by the noble spirit of the monkey and honoured the animal greatly and listened to his discourse on *Dharma*. The river, the orchard of trees laden with mangoes, the strange bridge and the sermon of the monkey are all painted.

Mahākapi jātaka II is the story of the monkey who rescued an ungrateful man from a deep pit, and in spite of the latter's attempt to kill him, showed him the way out of the forest with a most magnanimous spirit. The scenes depict the animal helping the man out of the pit and the ingratitude of the latter.

The *Sarabhamiga jātaka* is the story of the king of Banaras rescued by a stag from a pit.

The *Machchha jātaka* is the story of the Bodhisattva that saved his kin from death by drought by making a solemn asseveration to bring down rain.

The *Mātiposaka jātaka* relates the story of the dutiful elephant who took care of his blind mother and who, captured by the king of Banaras, refused to touch food till the king, out of compassion, released him to return to his parent. Scenes painted depict the refusal of the elephant to touch food, his release and his happy reunion with his mother.

The *Mahisa jātaka* is the story of the Bodhisattva who patiently put up with the antics of monkeys.

The *Simhala avadāna* recounts the story of Simhala, who, accompanied the several merchants, was shipwrecked on a strange island of demonesses, who, in the guise of beautiful nymphs, lured men and destroyed them. One of the latter followed Simhala in the guise of a beautiful woman, with a child in her arms, and claimed him as her husband before the king, who, struck by her beauty, made her his queen, in spite of the advice of his ministers. The result was the gradual disappearance of the palace folk, devoured by the demonesses. Simhala drove them out, set out with an army to reach their island, defeated them and became the ruler there.

The *Sibi jātaka* gives the story of the king who gladly gave away his eyes to a blind Brahmin at his request, little knowing that it was Śakra himself in disguise.

There is a short inscription *Śibirāja* painted in the panel in Vākāṭaka letters.

The *Ruru jātaka* narrates the story of the capture of the deer to preach the law to the king.

The *Nigrodhamiga jātaka* is the story of the Bodhisattva born as a compassionate deer, who offered himself to be killed in the place of a pregnant doe, to feed the king of Banaras on venison and how the ruler, touched by this act of kindness, released the animal and listened to his admonition of *karuṇā*.
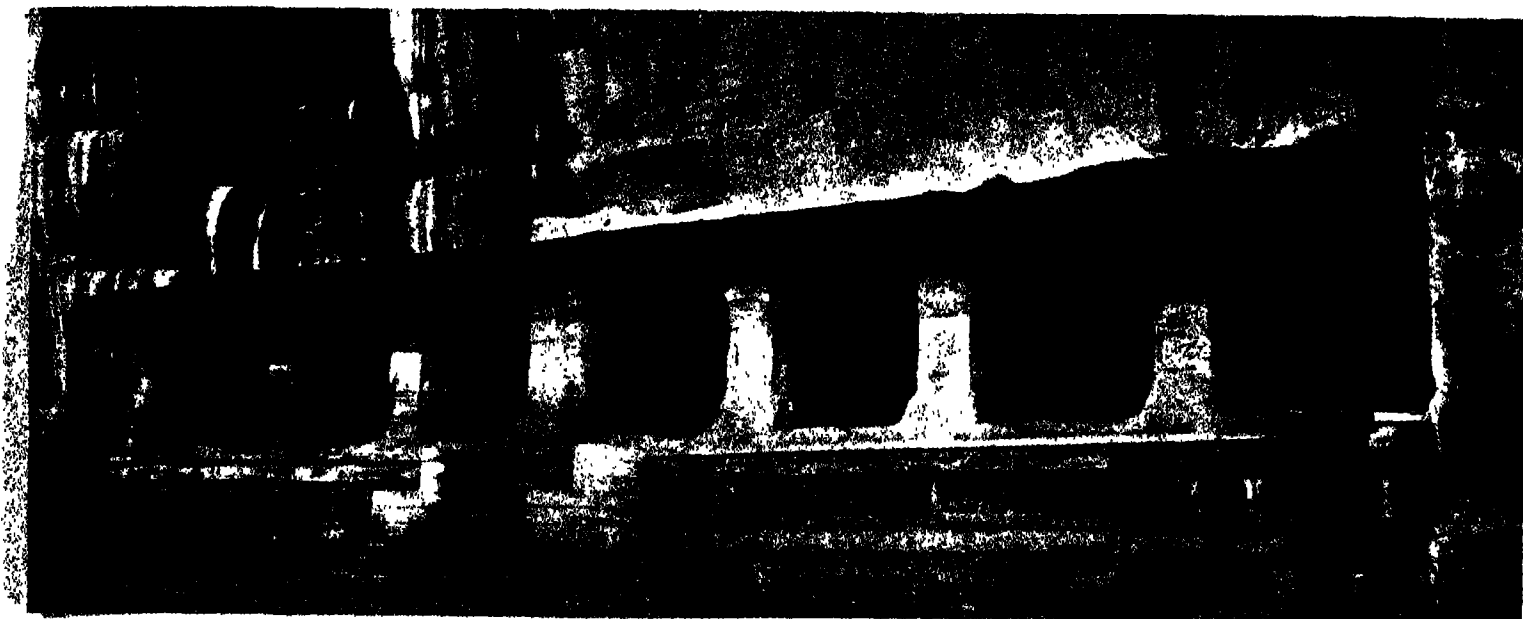
Fig. 12. Vaishṇava Cave, Western Chāḷukya, 6th century, Bādāmī

Early Western Chāḷukya

6th-8th centuries A.D.

THE Vākāṭakas, supreme in the Deccan, were succeeded by the Western Chāḷukyas, who established an empire which was among the most powerful in the early medieval Deccan. Pulakeśī I was succeeded by his warlike son, Kīrtivarman, father of the famous Pulakeśī II. Maṅgaleśa, the younger brother of Kīrtivarman, succeeded the latter to the throne. The great glory of Maṅgaleśa is clearly given in an inscription where the family tradition of the performance of several sacrifices testify to his devotion to the *dharma* aspect of life. His victories in battles, his possession of the three powers—*prabhu, mantra* and *utsāha* (power, counsel and initiative) indicate the *artha* aspect of his worldly success as a true *kshatriya*. His personal beauty is compared to the full-moon in the firmament of the family of the Chāḷukyas and points to his success in the sphere of *kāma*; his numerous good qualities and his efficiency and his mastery of all Śāstras are all set forth in great detail. But what has not been fully described is implied in the magnificent decoration of the Vaishṇava Cave at Bādāmī, his creation (Fig. 12). Probably there is a veiled reference here to his name as Maṅgaleśa, a mansion of *maṅgala*, auspiciousness counted in terms of military success: *chatussāgaraparyantāvanivijayamaṅgalakāgāraḥ*, 'the auspicious abode of victory on earth extending to the shores of the four oceans'.

Maṅgaleśa was a great patron of art and created some magnificent caves and temples in his capital. The loveliest of them all is Cave 4, i.e. the Vaishṇava Cave, as it is called. The most important of the carvings here represent the principal forms of Vishṇu, like Trivikrama, Narasimha, Virāṭ, Bhogāsanāsīna and Varāha. The last one, the Varāha, being also the *lāñchana* (emblem) of the Chāḷukyas, has been shown to special advantage, as it also suggests how the king had reason to take pride in shouldering the responsibilities of the vast realm on earth under his sway, like Varāha, who raised the almost submerged Pṛithvī.

In an inscription, dated Śaka 500, i.e. 578—579 A.D., in the 12th year of his reign, the construction of this cave temple is elaborately described as well as the installation of the image of Vishṇu in it. The inscription near the Varāha panel is full of information and suggests that visitors should look around at the ceiling and walls, and comprehend the wonderful decoration of the cave by craftsmen of Maṅgaleśa.

It clearly states that the cave is dedicated to Vishṇu, mentioning Maṅgaleśa as a *Bhāgavata*. It describes the cave temple as 'exceeding the height of two men and of wonderful workmanship, extensive in its major and minor parts, ceiling and sides all extremely beautiful to behold': *Paramabhāgavatolayana mahāvishṇugriham atidvaimānushyakam atyadbhutakarmavirachitam bhūmibhāgopabhāgopariparyantātiśayadarśanīyatamam kṛitvā* (*Indian Antiquary* VI, p. 363; X, p. 58).

In India every part of a building was painted in such a way as to captivate the minds of appreciative connoisseurs of art. Fragments of paintings in the upper cells of the Dharmarāja *ratha* at Mahābalipuram and in other Pallava cave temples, like the Kailāsanātha Temple at Kāñchīpuram, are all that remain of fully painted shrines. Bādāmī also had this decorative treatment. This decoration, described in the inscription at Bādāmī, leaves no doubt that the painters of Maṅgaleśa's court were carrying on the traditions of the earlier Vākāṭakas, whose caves were painted. The classical style of the paintings of Bādāmī likewise clearly proves the continuation of Vākāṭaka tradition by the Chāḷukyas of Bādāmī.

The credit of the discovery of these paintings on the heavily vaulted roof of the front *maṇḍapa* goes to Stella Kramrisch. The paintings of Bādāmī are among the earliest in Brahmanical temples, just as the paintings at Ajaṇṭā and Sittannavāśal are among the earliest Buddhist and Jaina murals respectively.

Maṅgaleśa's patronage of art, is clear in the fragments of the paintings at Bādāmī. A large panel, of which a part only is illustrated here, represents a scene in the palace, where the central seated figure is witnessing music and dance. From the balcony above there is a group of visitors watching the scene. The principal figure, with a soft bluish-green complexion, is seated with one foot resting on his couch and the other on the *pādapīṭha* (foot stool), but the painting is too nearly obliterated for details to be made out. The beautiful torso of the figure and the two hands can be distinguished. The face is lost, though a portion of the *makuṭa* (crown) is preserved. A beautiful necklace, with lovely pendant tassels, usual in the Chāḷukya style, can be seen on the neck. The *yajñopavīta* (sacred thread) is composed of pearls. At the feet of this important personage are a number of seated figures, mostly damaged,

Fig. 13. Queen and chauri-bearers, 6th century, Courtesy of SKIRA

and surrounding him are several damsels in attendance, some of them holding the *chāmaras* (fly whisks). To the left is the orchestra composed of musicians and two beautiful dancing figures—a male and a female —the former in the *chatura* pose, with his left hand in the *daṇḍahasta* (straight across), the latter with her legs crossed almost in the *pṛishṭhasvastika* (dance pose) attitude and her right hand in *daṇḍa*; she wears her hair in an elaborate coiffure. All the musicians playing various instruments, like the flute and drum, are women. The scene is placed in a great mansion, with a pillared hall, provided with a *yavanikā* or screen, arranged in a way to indicate the inner apartments of the palace. It may be identified as the scene of Indra in his magnificent palace Vaijayanta, witnessing dance and music, and the dancer may be Bharata or Taṇḍu himself. It may be recalled that Urvaśī made a mistake on one such occasion of performance at Indra's court.

In this context the next panel can be understood. This depicts the royal personage seated at ease in the *mahārājalīlā* pose, with his right leg on the *pādapīṭha*, his left leg raised and placed on the seat and his left arm resting in a leisurely manner on his knee, his right hand held in *tripatāka* attitude. There are 'several crowned princes' seated on the ground to his right, 'attending on him and awaiting his orders', echoing Kālidāsa's verse: *nṛipatayaś śataśo maruto yathā śatamakham tam akhaṇḍita-paurusham* (*Raghuvaṁśa* ix, 13). Towards the farthest end is a woman dressed in a lower garment of

Fig. 14. Chaurī-bearers, 6th century

the *āprapadīna* type that is anklet length, and holding a *vetradaṇḍa*, or a staff, and she appears to be the usher, or the *pratīhārī*. To the left of the picture is the queen, attended by *prasādhikās* or attendants, one of whom is painting her feet with *alaktaka* (red lac). The queen is seated on a low couch with rectangular back provided with cushions. *Chāmaradhāriṇīs* (*chaurī*-bearers), with their hair dressed either in the *dhammilla* or *jaṭā* fashion (braided or plaited), attend on her and also on the prince (Figs.13 and 14). The queen is seated in a relaxed manner, her right leg touching the *pādapīṭha* (foot stool), and the left raised on the seat itself. The *patrakuṇḍalas* (earrings) droop from her ear lobes. The *ananta*, or armlets, entwine her arms. The necklets and bracelets add charm to her already charming form. Her hair is dressed beautifully in *dhammilla* fashion, and the *chikura*, or ringlets of hair, are visible as they nestle on her forehead. She wears the striped *ardhoruka* or short garment covering the thighs. The prince is swarthy and the queen is of the *gaura* or fair type. The scene is laid in one of the inner apartments of the palace.

This appears to be the portrait of Kīrtivarman, painted as pendant to Indra in all his glory, in his court, to suggest the close similarities that Kālidāsa has so often suggested in his writings. Thus in the line of the *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* (ii, 16): *āśamsante surayuvatayo baddhavairā hi daityairasyādhijye dhanushi vijayam pauruhūte cha vajre*, as in that of the *Raghuvamśa* (ix, 12): *śamitapakshabalaś śatakoṭinā śikhariṇām kuliśena purandaraḥ sa śaravṛishṭimuchā dhanushā dvishām svanavatā navatāmarasānanaḥ*, he refers to 'the thunderbolt of Indra in heaven' and to 'the bow and arrow of the King on earth, as sustaining the two worlds'. The great ruler on earth, when he reached heaven, became a partner in the glory of heaven with Indra. Inscriptions and literature recall the belief that a departed king goes to heaven to be in the congregation of Indra himself. Accordingly Kīrtivarman shares the glory of Indra, in his Sudharmā Devasabhā: *avanimavanatārir yaśchakārātmasamsthām pitari surasakhitvam prāptavatyātmaśaktyā* (Fleet C. I. I. III, p. 59) and *tasmin sureśvaravibhūtigatābhilāshe rājābhavat tadanujaḥ kila maṅgaleśaḥ* (*Epigraph. Ind.* VI, p. 1ff): 'when his father became a companion of Indra, he brought the earth under his sway by his triumph over his foes', 'when he (Kīrtivarman) aspired for the glory of Indra in heaven, his brother Maṅgaleśa became the king' give this idea clearly.

Maṅgaleśa had such great love and respect for his royal elder brother that he made over to him the entire merit of the offering of the cave, as recorded in the inscription there. His affection explains the portrait of his brother in an intimate setting with his queen and friendly subordinate rulers. There was no better compliment that Maṅgaleśa could pay his brother than by representing him side by side with Indra.

Significantly this painting is close to the sculpture of Varāha in the Bādāmī cave. This relief inspired the Varāha sculpture at Mahābalipuram, where the portrait of Narasiṃhavarman's grandfather and father, Siṃhavishṇu and Mahendravarman, with their queens, are carved close to the Varāha, following the tradition at Bādāmī. It is also interesting to recall the lines of Kālidāsa in relation to this panel: *aindram padam bhūmigatopi bhunkte* (*Raghuvamśa* vi, 27), *tayor divaspaterāsīt ekas simhāsanārdhabhāg dvitīyāpi sakhī śachyāḥ pārijātāmśabhāginī* (*Raghuvamśa* xvii, 7), which gives stress to both king and queen: 'he enjoys Indra's glory even on earth: of them, the one occupied half the throne of Indra while the other shared with Śachī (Indra's queen) the celestial tree'.

This portrait of the king, Kīrtivarman, exactly facing the central shrine, towards the farthest end, allows the royal devotee, long after his physical body had been consumed on the funeral pyre, to pay eternal adoration to Vishṇu.

There are two other fragments of panels also to be noticed in the Bādāmī cave, representing flying pairs of Vidyādharas. One of them shows their hands around each others' necks (in *Kaṇṭhāślesha*). The *makuṭa* (crown) of the Vidyādhara and the beautiful *dhammilla* (braid) of the Vidyādharī are noteworthy. The latter is swarthy while the former is fair.

The second pair is even more beautiful, though less well preserved. The Vidyādhara plays the *vīṇā*. Here the damsel is fair and her consort is greenish-blue, recalling the description of Kālidāsa: *indīvaraśyāmatanur nṛiposau, tvam rochanāgauraśarīrayashṭiḥ anyonyaśobhāparivṛiddhaye vām yogas taḍittoydayorivāstu*, (*Raghuvamśa* vi, 65): 'This king is dark like a lily, you fair like musk; let you both unite like the cloud and lightning, enhancing your beauty'.

These few painted fragments at Bādāmī, although the only existing material for the study of early Chāḷukya painting, are clearly at the same level as the magnificent remains of sculpture of this period of glory in the Deccan.

Fig. 16. Devī, 7th century, Pallava, Panamalai, Courtesy of SKIRA

Chaityakāri, temple-builder, and so forth. His titles suggest his artistic taste. He was an architect, engineer, poet and artist—all in one. His son, Narasiṃhavarman I, who was probably amongst the greatest conquerors of his day, and ranked with Pulakeśī and Harsha, his two great contemporaries,

created monuments which are even now regarded with wonder by connoisseurs. Towards the end of the 7th century, the Kailāsanātha Temple at Kāñchīpuram (Fig. 15) was constructed by another great Pallava king, Rājasiṃha, who was aided in this task by his art-minded queen, Raṅgapatākā. The rare surviving fragments in the monuments of this king give us a very few splendid examples of the Pallava phase of painting.

Traces of line and colour in cave temples, as at Māmaṇḍūr, indicate how great was this lost period of painting.

In the structural Pallava temples at Panamalai and Kāñchīpuram there are other fragments which give us a glimpse of the development of painting a few decades later. The beautiful goddess, with a crown on her head and an umbrella held over her, from Panamalai, is Pārvatī watching the dance of her lord, Śiva (Fig. 16). She stands gracefully with one leg bent in exactly the same manner as the princess is represented in sculpture of the 2nd century at Amarāvatī and in Vākāṭaka painting of the 5th century at Ajaṇṭā. This favourite pose continues even into later times and one of the masterpieces of sculpture in the Choḷa period at Tribhuvanam is a magnificent maiden or *surasundarī* (celestial nymph) in an identical posture. Pārvatī at Panamalai, in this painting, is very close to a large painting of Śiva dancing in the *lalāṭatilaka* (foot touching forehead) pose, multi-armed, exactly as he is portrayed in the relief to the right of the entrance of the main cell of the Kailāsanātha shrine at Kāñchī. Unfortunately in this painting the form is almost completely faded out, though with great difficulty it can be made out by close examination. No photograph gives a good idea of the lines composing this pleasing figure, which is a masterpiece of Pallava workmansip. These two paintings in an outer cell, to the left of the shrine, are exposed not only to the ravages of weather but also to indiscriminate vandalism.

Fig. 17. Mahāpurusha, 7th century, Pallava, Kāñchīpuram

This painting along with the charming remains of a princely figure and a Somāskanda, from two of the cloistered cells surrounding the courtyard of the Kailāsanātha Temple at Kāñchīpuram, illustrate the painter's art of Rājasimha's time. The paintings here in this temple were the discovery of Jouveau Dubreuil, who had earlier noticed such remains in Sittannavāśal.

As one proceeds clockwise, peering into the small cells in the *pradakshiṇapatha* (perambulatory passage) and examining their walls, daubs of paint and traces of line are discerned and suggest what a pageant of colour they once were. Most of the walls are now a dull white or blank. In cell No. 9, fragments of painting portray the upper and lower right arms of Śiva, the rest being lost. In the 11th small cell

Fig. 18. Somāskanda, 7th century, Pallava, Kāñchīpuram

can be seen a fragment of a beautiful Pallava face of Śiva, with only a part of the left eye, nose, lip, cheek, the *kuṇḍala* on the ear and *yajñopavīta* (sacred thread) on the shoulder preserved. In No. 12 there is just a portion of a beautiful face and the right side of the body. The *jaṭā* is arranged almost as in the Bādāmī Cave. In cell No. 23 is a painting of Śiva, with the sacred thread running over his right arm, and with a single string issuing from the *brahmagranthi* (knot) which is lost, holding a *śūla* (trident) in his lower right arm, with its prongs lost; and to the left is another four-armed figure, with only a portion of two right arms, and the sacred thread running over the right arm preserved. In the cell No. 34 is a beautiful line drawing in red of a *mahāpurusha*, whose *kirīṭa* (crown) left shoulder and a portion of torso and left thigh are all that remain (Fig. 17). The *kirīṭa* is a precursor of the ornate but delightful headgear characteristic of Choḷa art. In cell No. 46, a portion of the lower layer, which lies exposed, shows a beautiful sketch with red wash, all that is left of a once colourful painting of a four-armed deity; it reveals the portion near the waist with the *kaṭisūtra* (waist-band), the right hand resting on the knot of the *kaṭisūtra*, the fingers of the upper right hand against the chest.

Probably the most important painting here, though only a drawing in red, for all the colour has vanished, is the one representing Somāskanda (Fig. 18) on the back wall of cell No. 41. Though there is little of paint left here, yet the vermilion aureole around the child's head suggests the intention of the painter in use of colour (Fig. 19).

Fig. 19. Somāskanda, 7th century, Pallava, Kāñchipuram

Though fragmentary, the painting representing Somāskanda indicates the wonderful flow of the lines composing the figures of seated Śiva and Pārvatī, with baby Skanda in the centre and the *gaṇa*, the follower of Śiva, on one side, at his feet, and a charming attendant of Pārvatī beside her, at the edge of her seat. When we recall that the Somāskanda theme was a great favourite in Pallava art and that this is the only representation of it in a painting of this period, preserved for us, we may very well appreciate how important this is in the study of Pallava painting. It is a lovely theme of fond parents and a frolicsome child, of the ideal mates and the object of their love, of the philosophy of affection which, though lavished on the off-spring, increases a thousandfold: *rathāṅganāmnoriva bhāvabandhanam babhūva yat prema parasparāśrayam vibhaktamapyekasutena tat tayoḥ parasparasyopari paryachīyata:* 'their mutual love, intense like that of the *chakravāka* birds, though shared by their only child, increased mutually a thousandfold, (*Raghuvaṁśa* iii, 24).

The lines composing these figures are fragmentary but there remains enough to make out the Somāskanda group. Śiva is seated, his right leg lowered and the left bent on the seat. The *jaṭāmakuṭa* (crown of locks of hair) is lost. The curve of the face and ear-lobes suggests what a beautiful portion has been lost. The torso shows the perfection of the contour at its best, the upper hands are more suggested than complete, but the lovely palm of the lower left, nestling on the lap, makes up for all that is lost of the lower right of which the fingers alone remain. The *yajñopavīta*, flowing in a curve and hanging in tassels, is matched only by the elaborate girdle and pleasing folds of the silken garments. *Keyūras* (bracelets) and *udarabandha* complete a most pleasing arrangement of jewellery. The baby beside him, Skanda, is a noble representation of the age of innocence. A tiny coronet adorns the juvenile head. From his mother's lap, he looks at his father meaningfully. The mother of this pretty child is a painter's dream, a marvel of brush work, a delicate subject, treated tenderly. She is seated on a couch, with her right leg on her seat and the left hanging down to rest on a cushioned footstool which is lost. The face of
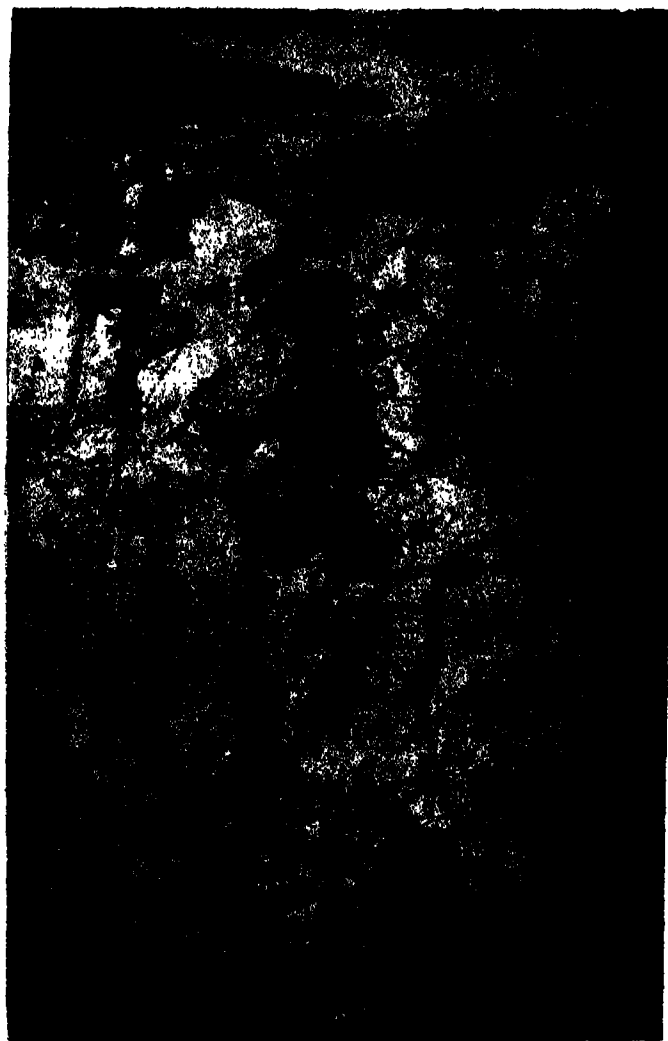
Fig. 20. Kinnara and Kinnarī, 7th century, Pallava, Kāñchīpuram

Umā is obliterated and we can imagine its beauty, with gem-decked crown and flower-filled braid, the right hand caresses the child, the left rests on the seat. The full breasts, the attenuated waist and the broad hips supply a fullness to the form that idealises feminine grace. The pendant, which is all that is left of a necklace, is in a place where beauty of form enhances the beauty of ornaments. The armlets and various types of bracelets are present. The elaborate girdle with its multiple tassels flowing down the sides of the couch, like a tiny silver streamlet descending in little cascades, is a piece of work of which any master should be proud. The silken garment worn by the goddess is worked with a pleasing pattern. At the couple's feet on either side, the two attendants are *uddhata,* or forceful, beside Śiva and *lalita,* or the soft-type near Umā. There is a strange tinge of intelligence and calm in the *gaṇa* beside Śiva and a soft look may be seen in the sweet face of the one near the Lord's consort.

The fragment of painting depicting a Kinnara and Kinnarī (half man, half bird) as celestial musicians can rank with any of the best of this type at Ajaṇṭā (Fig. 20).

Early Pāṇḍya

7th-9th centuries A.D.

THE history of the early Pāṇḍyas helps us in understanding why both their cave temples and their rock-cut, free-standing temples recall, and so closely resemble, those of the early Pallavas.

During the time of the Pallava king, Siṃhavishṇu, who overcame the Pāṇḍyas, his son, Mahendravarman, and grandson, Narasimhavarman, Pallava influence was dominant in the South.

Arikesari Parāṅkuśa, the Pāṇḍyan king, contemporary of the last two Pallava kings, was converted from Jainism by the baby saint, Tirujñānasambandha, in the latter half of the 7th century, just as the Pallava king, Mahendravarman, had been converted by Appar, the elder contemporary of Tirujñānasambandha. This Pāṇḍyan king, with the zeal of a new convert, and with the enthusiastic support of his queen, encouraged his new faith in every way, including building of temples.

Fig. 21. Dancer, Early Pāṇḍya, 9th century, Sittannavāśal

Fig. 22. Cave temple, Early Pāṇḍya, Tirumalaipuram

The Pāṇḍya king, Māravarman Rājasimha, also known as Pallava-bhañjana, in the 8th century, during the troubled time of Nandivarman Pallavamalla, found it a favourable moment to attack the Pallavas. His son Neḍuñjaḍayan had a minister, Uttaramantri Mārangāri, called also Madhurakavi, who excavated a temple for Vishṇu in the Ānamalai hill in the neighbourhood of Madurai, and recorded his act in an inscription.

The Pāṇḍyas, like the Chāḷukyas, who also frequently fought the Pallavas, admired the beauty of the Pallava cave temples and monolithic shrines. The Pāṇḍyas had matrimonial alliances with the Pallavas, as in the case of Kochaḍayan, the father of Māravarman Rājasimha. The aesthetic taste of a princess of the Pallava line, no doubt, also had influence, for artistic taste seemed inborn in the family. For example, Raṅgapatākā, the queen of Pallava Rājasimha, associated herself with her husband in the construction of lovely temples at Kāñchīpuram.

It is no wonder, therefore, that, in such proximity to the Pallava country, with the Chera power almost eclipsed at the time, the Pāṇḍyas adopted Pallava art ideas in architecture, sculpture and painting.

Fig. 23. Lotus scroll, Early Pāṇḍya, Tirumalaipuram

In the Tirumalaipuram Cave Temple (Fig. 22), there are fragments of paintings of the early Pāṇḍya period. They were discovered by Jouveau Dubreuil who assigned them to the Pāṇḍya period. This cave temple closely resembles Pallava ones of the Mahendra period from Māmaṇḍūr, Maṇḍagapaṭṭu, Dalavānūr, Sittannavāśal and other places. What little of painting remains here shows the dexterity of the painter in portraying such themes as birds and flowers, especially the lotus, decorative patterns and human figures.

Fig. 24. Royal portrait, Early Pāṇḍya, 9th century, Sittannavāśal

The medallion in the centre of the ceiling, a painting of *Gaṇas*, offers an opportunity to study the work of the Pāṇḍyan painter. It reminds us of the remark of the king, in the *Viddhasālabhañjikā*, commenting on a picture before him, with its continuous and free flow of line, giving richness to form by the sweeping curves. Here the drawing of the *Gaṇas*, with an economy of sinuous lines, gives a rich effect.

The painter's mastery of line is likewise revealed in the figure of a heavenly being riding a ferocious lion, painted on the ceiling, near the carved panel of Brahmā. The wild ferocity of the lion and the dignified serenity of the riding figure are balanced in masterly fashion. This figure unfortunately is darkened with a film of soot. The element of *rekhā* (line) is rich here though the element of *bhūshaṇa* (decoration) is rather poor. The robes covering the bodies of the bearded men, in the group of figures painted on the side panel of the capital of the pilaster, are distinctive with flower patterns. Among the dancing *Gaṇas* on the ceiling, the drummer, with his head bent, reminds us of a similar figure in a Choḷa painting at Tañjāvūr. If we take the figures of the bearded men, in the company of women, as Ṛishis engaged in amorous sports, they would be examples of the description given in the *Śilparatna*

Fig. 25. Lotus gatherers, Early Pāṇḍya, 9th century, Sittannavāśal

which forbids presentation of *tapasvilīlā* (sports of sages) in places other than temples and palaces. Śrīharsha has elaborately described the figures of such sporting Ṛishis on the walls of the *chitraśālā* of Nala's palace in his *Naishadhīyacharita*. But considering the dress of the bearded men, and a boar on the shoulder of one of them, they appear to be hunters. This theme of bacchanalian orgies suggests foreign influence, which is explained by the fact that the Pāṇḍyan kingdom was a rich commercial centre with contacts all over the civilized world, especially with Rome, from the early centuries of the Christian era. The pearls of the Pāṇḍyan fisheries were greatly in demand in Rome and a regular colony of *Yavanas* (Romans) existed at Madurai. They may therefore represent the revelry of *Yavanas* referred to in the *Śilappadikāram*.

The figure of the woman, which remains undamaged, has feminine grace of form; but the face of another woman, all that is left of her figure, is outstanding in its charm and dignity. The figures of the two bearded men are not so perfect. The heads are slightly too large and the legs disproportionately short.

The lotuses painted white, on an indigo background, cover a considerable area of the ceiling (Fig. 23). They are simple in treatment, and effective. The lotus scroll, as well as the ornamental patterns in black, and tinted blue, on the brackets of the pilaster, are masterful in design.

The painting of the fierce lion on the ceiling, described earlier, indicates a careful study of the moods of animals. The lion, however, is a conventional presentation, while the figure of the duck is a sympathetic bird study. The twist of the neck and the turn of the head, to allow resting its beak on the downy back, and the short legs, recalling the bird's slow movement and awkward gait, heighten its effect.

In the Sittannavāśal Cave it has been recently found that there are two layers of paintings, an earlier and a later, as also an inscription of the 9th century, relating to additions and renovations to the cave temple in the early Pāṇḍyan period. It is thus clear that what were taken to be early Pallava paintings, of the time of Mahendravarman, actually are Pāṇḍyan paintings of the 9th century. The cave itself

is Pallava, and a portion of the ceiling, originally painted and not completely covered by a Pāṇḍyan coat, reveals patterns of the early Pallava painter. The figures, however, like the famous prince and princess (Fig. 24), with a monk before them, and the two marvellous dancers, as well as the pool filled with flowers, fishes, ducks, a buffalo and elephant, are all Pāṇḍyan paintings of great elegance, revealing the craftsmanship of the painter.

Fig. 26. Lotus gatherers, Early Pāṇḍya, 9th century, Sittannavāśal

The inscription in Tamil verse near the southern end of the façade mentions a Jaina *Achārya*, Iḷan Gautaman, hailing from Madurai, who renovated and embellished the *ardhamaṇḍapa* (intermediary hall) and added a *mukhamaṇḍapa* (front hall).

The tank, containing a delightful picture of fishes, animals, birds and flower-gatherers, (Figs. 25 and 26), probably does not refer to the parable of the lotus pool, but to the 'region of the tank', the second *kaṭikabhūmi* (region) where the *bhavyas*, or the good ones, rejoice while washing themselves, as they pass on from region to region in order to hear the discourse of the Lord, in the *samavasaraṇa* structure.

The figure of the dancer (Fig. 27), with the left hand in the *daṇḍa* (straight like a rod) posture, and the other, with the fingers composing the *patāka* (flag), with the face slightly tilted, and the eyes turned in that direction, is as effective as in the case of the Naṭarāja, in the usual *bhujaṅgatrāsita* (scared by snake) pose. This disposition of the two hands in the mode of *bhujaṅgatrāsitaka* is repeated in the *chatura* mode of the dance of Śiva as in the famous example in metal from Tiruvaraṅguḷam, now in the National Museum. How pleasing is this combination of the *hastas*, *daṇḍa* and *patāka*, is judged by its occurrence in the panel of the dance scene at Barabudur where the figure is exactly portrayed as in this Sittannavāśal painting. As these two hands sum up the promise of refuge to those seeking protection they are significant and appropriate. The other nymph (Fig. 21), with the left hand stretched out in joy, and the right in *patāka*, with the whole body swaying in lovely flexions, reminds one of Bālakṛishṇa or Bālasubrahmaṇya dancing in sheer joy. The elaborate coiffure, with flowers and pearls, and

Fig. 27. Dancer, Early Pāṇḍya, 9th century, Sittannavāśal

simple, but effective ornamental decoration, along with the graceful figures themselves, composing these beautiful feminine themes, and the delightful crown of the prince, in his portrait in the company of the princess, reveal the skill of the painter.

Early Chera

8th-9th centuries A.D.

THE influence of Pallava and Pāṇḍya art is obvious in the Chera country and in the Koṅgu area which was included in the kingdom of the Cheras. Chera rock-cut caves, as at Kaviyūr and Tiruvallara, recall early Pallava ones like those at Māmaṇḍūr, Pallāvaram, Sīyamaṅgalam, Tiruchirāpalli, Mahendravāḍi, etc. The beautiful face in classical style (Fig. 28), which is practically all that is left of paintings once adorning the cave temple at Tirunandikkarai of about the 8th-9th centuries, represents the early phase of Chera art. This face can well be compared for study with the fragment of painting representing a princely figure from cell No. 34 of the Kailāsanātha Temple at Kāñchī, to which it bears a striking resemblance. The outline of a painted lion, also in this cave, depicts the face of the animal as very like the typical Rājasimha lions in Pallava art.

Fig. 28. Face of Mahāpurusha, Early Chera, 8th-9th century, Tirunandikkarai

Rāshṭrakūṭa

8th-10th centuries A.D.

THE power of the early Western Chāḷukyas came to an end in the middle of the 8th century when the Rāshṭrakūṭas, under Dantidurga, regained their power. Dantidurga was succeeded by his uncle Kṛishṇa I, who was a remarkable ruler, and was responsible for a unique monument in the Deccan, the Kailāsa Temple at Ellora (Fig. 29). The empire left by Kṛishṇa was greatly strengthened by successive rulers of military prowess, like Dhruva and Govinda. Amoghavarsha was more peace-loving. Himself a poet and a patron of literature and art, he was deeply interested in Jainism.
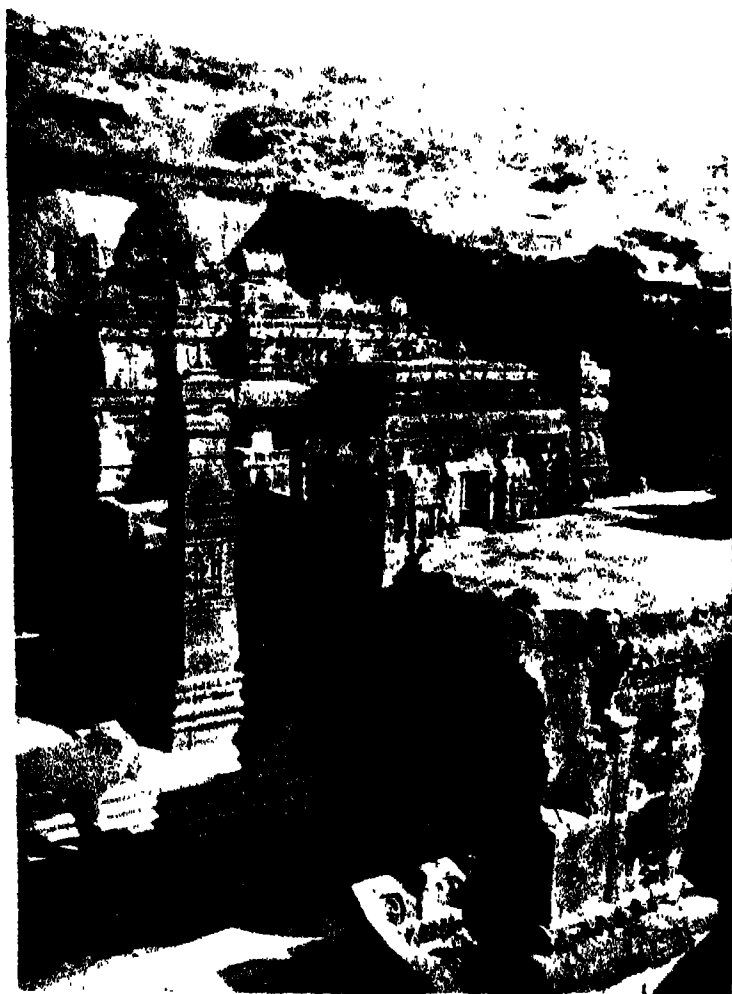
Fig. 29. Kailāsa Temple, Rāshṭrakūṭa, 8th century, Ellora

The Kailāsa Temple was carved out of the living rock by a sculptor who had a complete plan of that magnificent temple complex in his mind and could carve from the top downwards. The temple, when consecrated for worship, could truly claim to be an achievement, for, in India, the slightest mutilation in any part of an edifice would mean its desecration, making it unfit for worship. One is really baffled at how this master craftsman could achieve this impossible task of carving it without a single flaw. He must have been indeed a remarkable architect.

The beauty of this monument has been graphically described in the Baroda grant of Karka Suvarṇavarsha: "Seeing this wonderful temple on the mountain of Elāpura, the astonished immortals, travelling in celestial cars always take much thought: 'This is surely the abode of Svayambhū Śiva and not an artificially made (building). Has ever greater

beauty been seen?' Verily even the architect who built it felt astonished, saying: 'The utmost perseverance would fail to accomplish such a work again. Ah! how has it been achieved by me' and by reason of it the king was caused to praise his name."

It was a tribute paid by Kṛishṇa to the aesthetic taste of Vikramāditya, a scion of the vanquished dynasty, and an appreciation of the subjugated southern power at Kāñchī, which was the source of this artistic inspiration. The Kailāsa Temple is based on the Paṭṭaḍakal temples which, in turn, were executed by a great Sūtradhārī, named Sarvasiddhi Āchārya of the southern country, the subjugated area of Kāñchī.

Fig. 30. Naṭarāja, Rāshṭrakūṭa, 8th century, Kailāsa Temple, Ellora

The remarkable resemblance in details found between the Kailāsa Temple at Ellora and Kāñchīpuram made Jouveau Dubreuil look for and discover paintings in the latter. The value of these paintings is great, though they are so fragmentary.

The paintings at Ellora cover the ceilings and walls of the *maṇḍapas* and represent not only iconographic forms, but also floral designs with animals and birds entwined in them. The beautiful elephant, amidst a lotus pattern in gorgeous colour, now partially faded, is as lively as some of the other figure drawings (Fig. 32). There is a twinkle in the eye of the elephant that seems to make it live and move. The Naṭarāja here (Fig. 30) is an excellent example of the Chāḷukyan type, of which a well known early example at Bādāmī may at once be recalled for comparison. The figure is multi-armed and dances in the reversed *bhujaṅgatrāsita* (scared by snake) pose—unlike the four-armed form in the south; the Chāḷukyan tradition, usually closely follows the *bhujataruvana* (forest of arms) description of Kālidāsa in the matter of Naṭarāja figures. The anatomy of the figures, the details and ornamentation closely follow that of sculpture, including such minute details as the pattern of the *jaṭāmakuṭa* (crown of locks of hair), the elaboration in decoration and so forth. It is one of the most beautifully preserved panels at Ellora. The figure of Lakshmīnārāyaṇa on Garuḍa is also interesting and here we can note the peculiar eyes and the pointed nose, in three quarter view, which later, in developed form, becomes a distinguishing feature of the Western Indian paintings, from Gujarat, of the 14th-15th

Fig. 31. Lingodbhava, Rāshṭrakūṭa, 8th century, Kailāsa Temple, Ellora

century. The figure of a divinity on a *śārdūla* (tiger), as the principal figure in a group of flying celestials and dancers, is equally attractive. Though partially lost, the painting of Liṅgodbhava (Fig. 31), with Śiva appearing from out of the liṅga, with Brahmā and Vishṇu on either side, is here very significant, not only for its artistic excellence, but also for the importance that the Liṅgodbhava form has at Ellora. Behind the main cell, beyond the court-yard and in the cloistered walk around it, there is in the centre a huge figure of Liṅgodbhava, with equally huge images of Vishṇu and Brahmā on either side, in separate cells, an arrangement laying special emphasis on this form as has never been done anywhere else.

Flying figures of Vidyādharas (Fig. 33) with their consorts, against trailing clouds, forming the background, musical figures and other themes, closely follow early Chāḷukyan tradition. This is usually seen by comparing these Vidyādhara figures with those from the Bādāmī Caves of earlier date. The colour patterns, the arranging of one dark against the other fair, the *muktāyajñopavīta* (sacred thread of pearls) of the male and the elaborate *dhammilla* (braid) of the female figure, the flying attitude, etc., are all incomparable. The lovely contours of their moving forms, against trailing clouds, schematically yet artistically, presented, recall the lines Vālmīki of: *praviśannabhrajālāni nishpatamscha muhur muhuḥ prachchhannaścha prakāśaścha chandramā iva lakshyate, Rāmāyaṇa* V, 1) 'now entering the clouds and lost, now emerging from them and clearly visible, he looked like the moon'. The figures here, slim and slender, almost weightless and wearing pearled crowns, are, as Kramrisch puts it, 'direct descendants of the flying figures of the Gaṅgā relief at Māmallapuram'.

The Jaina Cave, Indra Sabha, at the farthest end, amongst the group of caves at Ellora, has the entire surface of the ceiling and the wall covered with painted scenes, with a wealth of detail. Here there are scenes illustrating Jaina texts and patterns, including floral, animal and bird designs. These are to be dated, along with the cave, somewhat later, probably a century or two after the great monument

of the time of Kṛishṇa, the Kailāsa Temple. The painting of Gomaṭeśvara is interesting for comparison with the sculptural version here. But it is the Dikpāla group of Yama, with his consort on a buffalo, preceded and followed by members of his retinue, presented in a band on the ceiling, that arrests our attention. It is interesting to compare it with a similar theme in Noḷamba sculpture from Hemāvati or a Chāḷukya panel from Araḷgupa. The treatment of clouds, the wide open eyes and the beginnings of stylization are to be noted here.
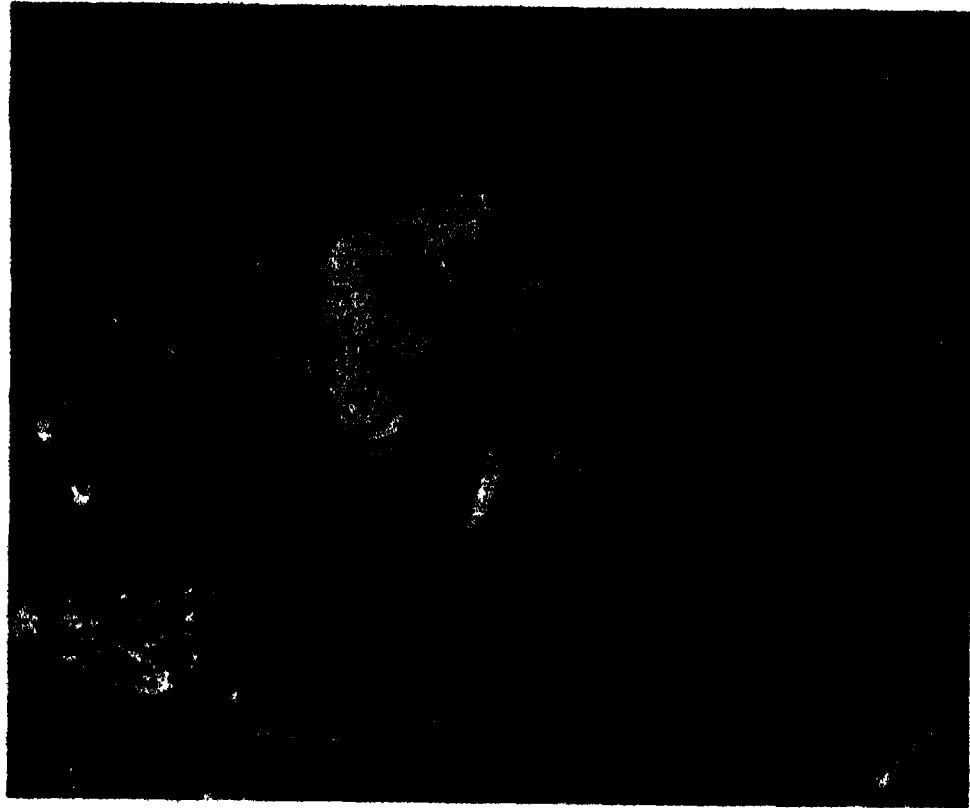
Fig. 32. Elephants in lotus pool, Rāshṭrakūṭa, 8th century, Kailāsa Temple, Ellora
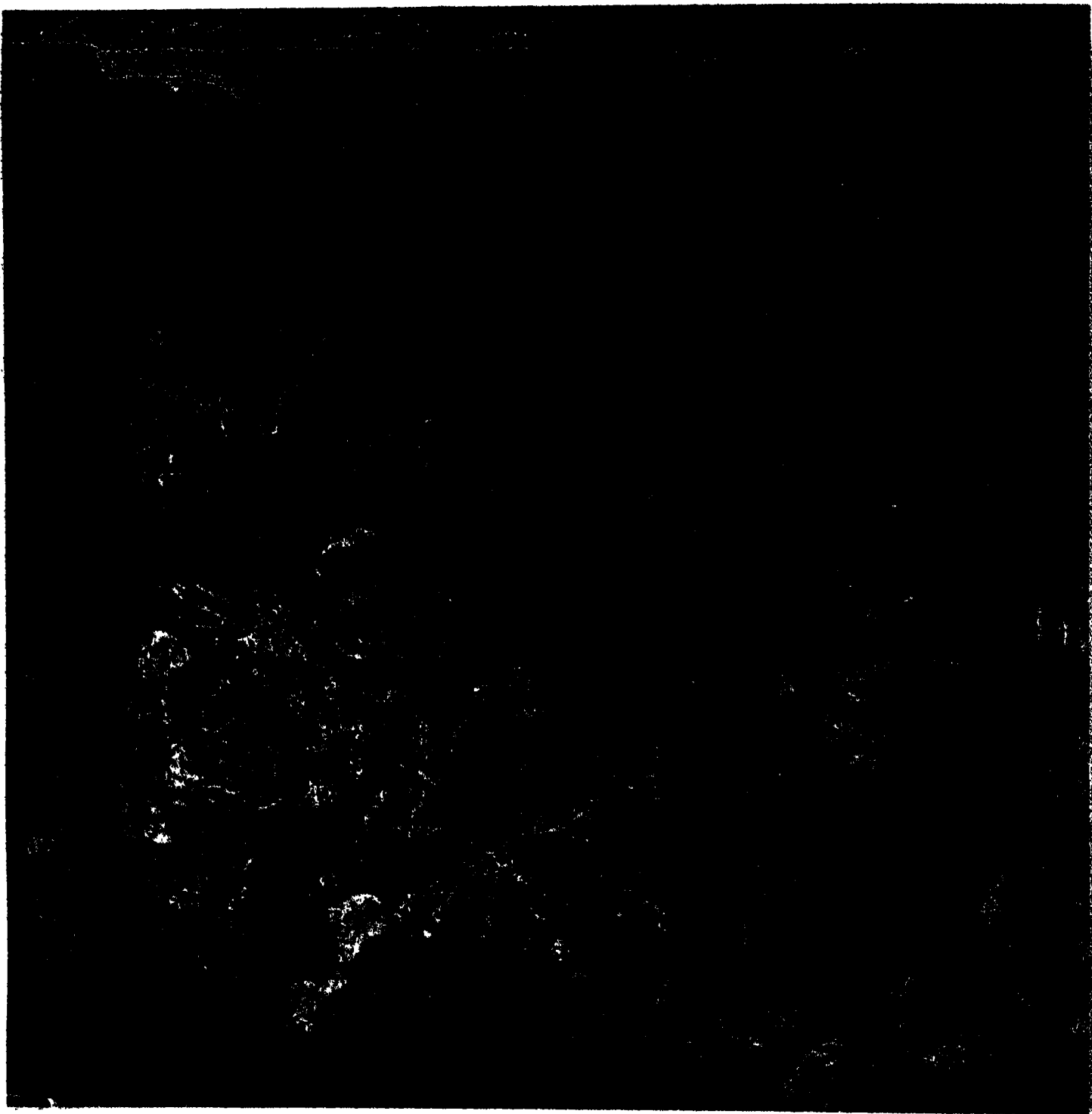
Fig. 33. Flying Vidyādharas, 9th century, Rāshṭrakūṭa, Jaina Cave, Ellora, Courtesy of SKIRA

Choḷa

9th-13th centuries A.D.

THE Choḷas came to power in the 9th century when Vijayālaya established himself in the area near Tañjāvūr. Āditya and Parāntaka, the son and the grandson of Vijayālaya, were responsible for great temple building activity. The latter actually devoted himself to Śiva at Chidambaram and covered the *sabhā* of Naṭarāja with gold. The widowed queen of the pious king, Gaṇḍarāditya, son of Parāntaka, is one of the most important queens in Choḷa history for her generosity in establishing the tradition of building and endowing temples, but probably the greatest monument of the Choḷa period is the Rājarājeśvara Temple at Tañjāvūr, also known as the Bṛihadiśvara Temple (Fig. 34). Rājarāja was a remarkable ruler, great in military triumph, in organization of the empire, in patronage of art and literature and in religious tolerance. In the twenty-fifth year of his reign, a magnificent temple of Śiva, named after the king, Rājarājeśvaramuḍayar, was completed. Rājarāja's intense devotion to Śiva has earned him the title, *Śiva-pādaśekhara* (crown adorned by Śiva's feet) and his taste for art, the epithet, *Nityavinoda* (always rejoicing in art). The greatness of Rājarāja was partially eclipsed by that of his greater son, Rājendra, who was a remarkable military genius and who, on his return from a successful campaign in the Gangetic area, erected 'a liquid pillar of victory' in the form of a huge tank in his own new capital, *Gaṅgaikoṇḍachoḷapuram*, and a gigantic temple resembling the Bṛihadīś-vara at Tañjāvūr, to celebrate his triumph and the bringing home of the Ganges' water as the only tribute from the vanquished northern powers.

Fig. 34. Bṛihadīśvara Temple, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Tañjāvūr

Kulottuṅga II, son of Vikrama Choḷa II, made elaborate additions to the Chidambaram Temple. This interest was sustained in the reign of his son, Rājarāja II, whose *biruda*, *Rājagambhīra* (majestic like a king) is recorded in the lovely *maṇḍapa* of the temple at Dārāsuram, built during his time. Kulottunga III was the last of the great Choḷa emperors to add to the existing structures, not only by building fresh temples, like the Kampahareśvara at Tribhuvanam, but also by renovations and additions, as at Kāñchī, Madurai, Chidambaram, Tiruvārūr, Tiruviḍaimarudūr and Dārāsuram.

Fig. 35. Śiva as Yogadakshiṇāmūrti, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Tañjāvūr

Though there are fragments of early Choḷa painting at Nārtāmalai, Malayaḍipaṭṭi and other places, belonging to the earlier phase, it is in the Bṛihadīśvara Temple at Tañjāvūr that there remains a great treasure of the art of the early Choḷa painters. The contemporary classics describe the glory of the painting in the South, referring to *chitramaṇḍapas, chitraśālās, oviyanilayams* (picture halls) in temples and palaces; the *Paripāḍal* mentions paintings on temple walls in the early Choḷa capital, Kāveripūmpaṭṭiṇam, but actual survivals from this period have not yet been discovered.

In the Vijayālaya Choḷīśvaram Temple, on the hill at Nārtāmalai, there are remains of painting

Fig. 36. Dancers, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Tañjāvūr

on the walls of the *ardhamaṇḍapa*, showing a dancing figure of Kālī and Gandharvas on the ceiling of the ante-chamber. A remarkable painting, almost approaching the classical portrayal of the painter's brush at the Bṛihadīśvara Temple, is Bhairava, wearing a pleasing patterned bodice and *muṇḍamālā* (garland of skulls) and *vastrayajñopavīta* (garment worn as sacred thread), attended by a hound, and standing gracefully, even in *samabhaṅga* (facing straight) pose against an artistic aureole of flames. Durgā, or all that is left of her figure, with *karaṇḍamakuṭa* (crown resembling a pile of pots), elaborate *kuchabandha* (breast band), and weapons with the flames quite visible and flanking *chāmaras* (fly whisks) above, indicating the early 12th century, is matched by other feminine figures in rows, all in elegant outline.

The Jaina paintings at Tirumalai, though later in date than those of Nārtāmalai, are yet not altogether so degenerate as Smith would have it. They come midway between Choḷa and Vijayanagar styles as they represent the last phase of Choḷa art. The groups of Kalpavāsi devas in the Lakshmīvara *maṇḍapa*, painted on the brick-walls of the outermost chamber, on the second floor, composing the

earlier painted layer, are pleasing figures, though tending toward the late style, profusely bejewelled and with large open eyes. The second painted layer is nearer the Vijayanagar manner.

The discovery of paintings around the main cell, in the dark passage in the Bṛihadīśvara Temple at Tañjāvūr, by S. K. Govindaswami in 1930, revealed a great phase of art, a regular picture gallery of early Choḷa paintings. There are two layers, one of the Nāyaka period on top, which, wherever it has fallen, has revealed an earlier one below, of fine Choḷa painting.

Originally the entire wall and the ceiling were decorated with exquisite paintings of the time of Rājarāja, but renovations and additions, during the centuries, have brought an additional layer covering up the early one. The earlier Pallava phase and the later Vijayanagar can best be studied with the aid of Choḷa paintings that form an important link in the series. The Choḷa paintings now exposed are mainly on the western side. The entire wall space consists of a huge panel with Śiva as Yogadakshiṇāmūrti (Fig. 35) seated on a tiger skin in a *yoga* pose, with a *yogapaṭṭa* or *paryaṅkagrandhibandha* (ascetic's band of cloth around the legs) across his waist and right knee, calmly watching the dance of two Apsarases (Fig. 36). A dwarf Gaṇa and Vishṇu play the drum and keep time, and other celestials sound the drum, the hand-drum and the cymbals, as they fly in the air to approach this grand spectacle (Figs. 37 and 38) which is witnessed by a few principal figures seated in the foreground. Below, Sundara and Cheramān are shown hurrying thither, on a horse and on an elephant respectively.

Fig. 37. Heavenly musicians and dancers, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Tañjāvūr

Fig. 38. Heavenly musicians, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Tañjāvūr, Courtesy of SKIRA
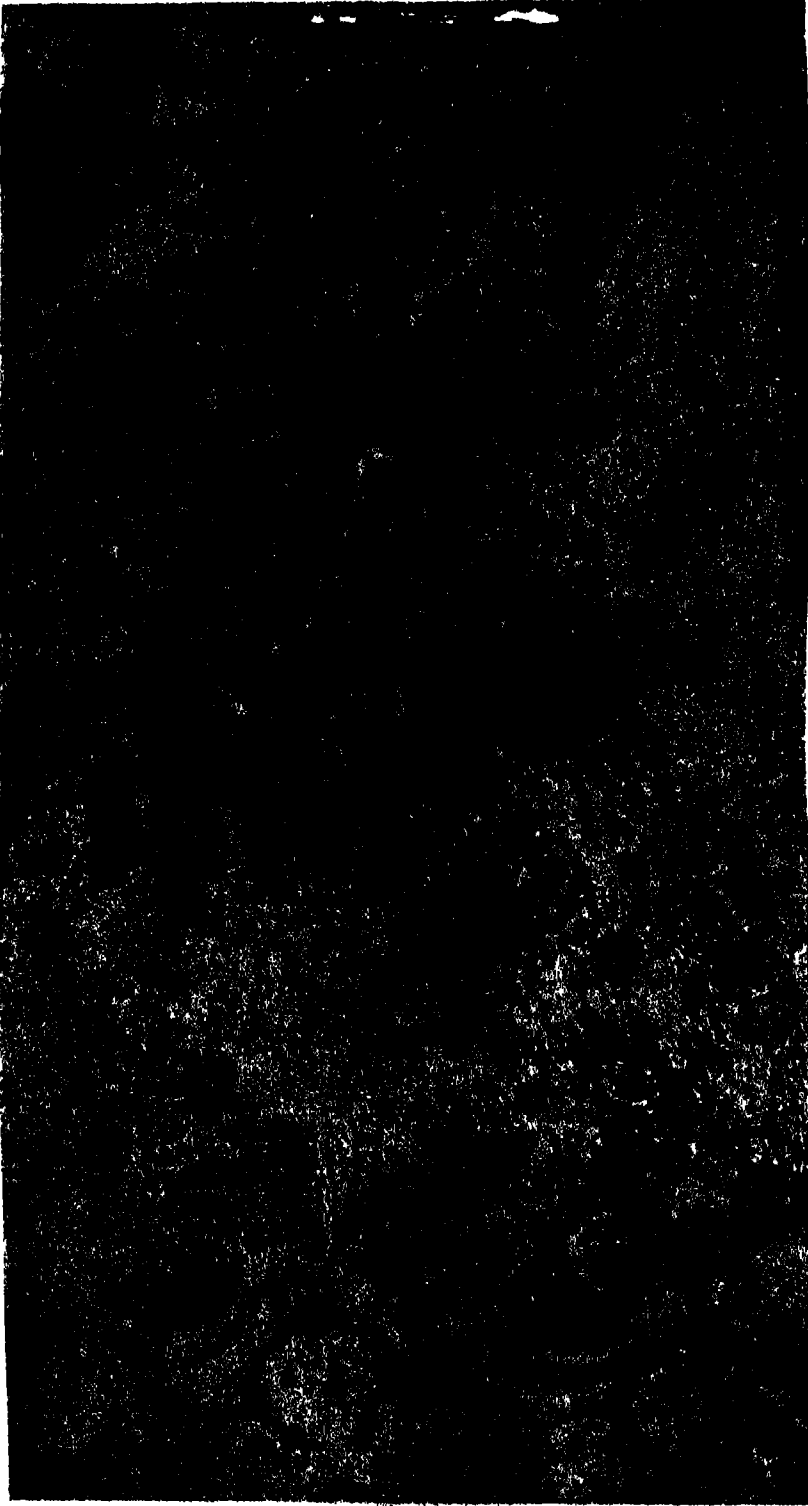
Fig. 39. Dancer, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Tañjāvūr

The picture of seated Śiva as Yogadakshiṇāmūrti, in all its grace and serene dignity, reminds us of the *nāndīśloka* of the *Mṛichchhakaṭika: paryaṅkagranthibandhadviguṇitabhujagāśleshasaṁvītajānoḥ antaḥprāṇāvarodhavyuparatasakalajñānaruddhendriyasya ātmanyātmānameva vyapagatakaraṇam paśyatastattvadṛishṭyā śambhorvaḥ pātu śūnyekshaṇaghaṭitalayabrahmalagnas samādhiḥ*, wherein this attitude of Śiva is beautifully portrayed.

The fingers of the dancer (Fig. 39) with the slender waist, the supple form, a slight tilt of the head, together with the graceful *mudrās* of the hand and the poise of the body, forming beautiful *bhaṅgas*, (flexions) remind one of the familiar line of Kālidāsa in the *Mālavikāgnimitra: chhando nartayitur yathaiva manasas ślishṭam tathāsyā vapuḥ:* 'her body is fashioned to suit the taste of the dancer'.

The artist has been most lavish here in his gift of ornamentation and has shown himself an adept at embellishment. In short, the figures of the two dancing damsels (Fig. 40) correspond exactly to the description of the *daitya* (demon) princess, Mahallikā, in the *Kāthāsaritsāgara: lalāṭatilakopetām chārunūpurapādikām smeradṛishṭim vidhātraiva sṛishṭā nṛittamayīmiva keśair arālair daśanais śikharair bibhratīm stanau uromaṇḍalinau nṛittam sṛijatīmiva nūtanam:* 'with jewel on forehead and anklet on foot, joyous eyes, curly hair, pearly teeth and rounded breasts, she appeared as though she were Dance itself fashioned by the Creator to create fresh modes of dance'.

Fig. 40. Dancers, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Tañjāvūr

The various *guṇas* (merits) and *alaṅkāras* (embellishments), that constitute beautifying factors in the case of good-looking persons in general, and lovely maidens in particular, and which have been given in detail by Rājānaka Ruyyaka in the two verses of his *Sahṛidayalīlā: rūpam varnaḥ prabhā rāga ābhijātyam vilasitā lāvaṇyam lakshaṇam chhāyā saubhāgyam chetyamī guṇāḥ ratnam hemāṁśuke mālyam maṇḍanadravyayojanā prakīrṇam chetyalankārās saptaivetā mayā matāḥ* 'form, complexion, brightness, nobility, gay abandon, charm, and auspiciousness are noteworthy qualities; jewels, golden attire, garlands and beauty aids are decorations', elaborately explained in his commentary thereon, appear in visible form in these two figures, as well as of the single dancer, with her body twisted at the back most dextrously in the *pṛishṭhasvastika*, with the legs crossed and the face turned artistically to look back. This dancer, with her braid filled with flowers, is a lovely dream of the painter (Fig. 39).

The picture of Vishṇu, painted close by as keeping time, is another *Mahāpurusha* (superman). The knowledge of *Mahāpurusha lakshaṇas* (characteristics of a *Mahāpurusha*) is essential for every Indian artist following the traditon. The grace of the lines that indicate the movements of the limbs is noteworthy in this as well as in the other figures in this picture. Of the *Bhaktas*, one keeps time by sounding
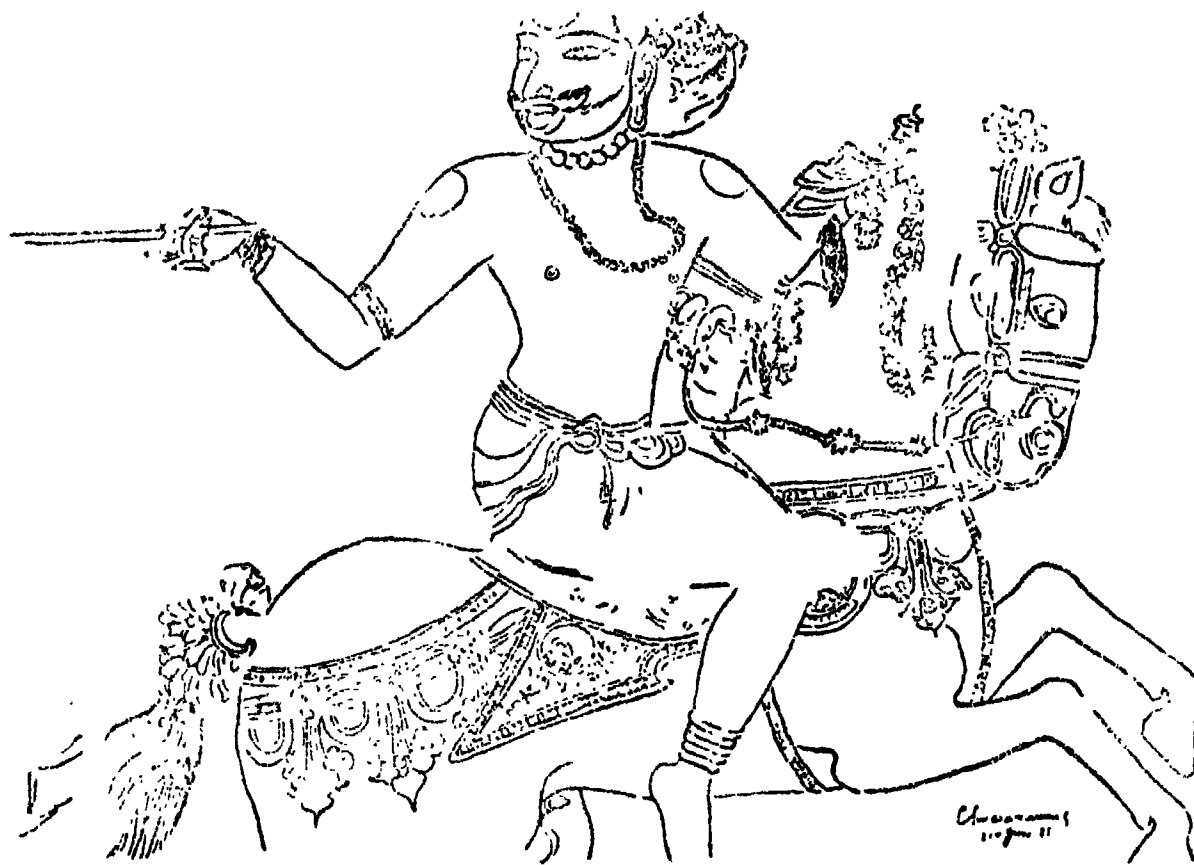
Fig. 41. Cheramān, Chola, 1000 A.D., Tañjāvūr

the cymbals, while the other is attuned to divine harmony of sound and action. Piety is written plainly on their faces.

The quaint little figure of the dwarf playing the part of the grotesque drummer is very often met with in Sanskrit literature in the person of the famous *kubjas* (hunchbacks) and *vāmanas* (dwarfs) so absolutely essential in royal households and peeping out of any group of pictures and carvings of ancient India. The epithet of *vismayalolitamauliḥ* (nodding the head in wonder) is used ironically in the case of Bhaṭṭaputra in the *Kuṭṭanīmata* of Damodaragupta, as also the praise in sarcastic verse: *brahmoktanāṭyaśāstre gīte murajādivādane chaiva abhibhavati nāradādīn prāvīṇyam bhaṭṭaputrasya;* 'the knowledge of Bhaṭṭaputra in the texts on dance, music and playing of instruments like the drum is such as to put to shame even Nārada and others'. In this plain and literal sense the same can be applied to the dwarf in this picture who exhibits in his form, personality and movement that essential and superior knowledge of *sangīta* (*music*) and *nāṭya* (dance) which is a regular feature with the *Gaṇas* of Śiva of whom he is one.

The long row of celestial musicians, playing different instruments, or using different significant *mudrās*, indicated by the graceful manipulation of fingers, the twist of the neck or the roll of the eyes, as they glance from one side to the other, are all eloquent proof of this painter's knowledge of the great science of Bharata.

The picture of the rider on the horse is equally attractive in every detail (Fig. 41). There is a grace in the way in which he holds the reins in one hand and the long wand in the other. The horse, though recalling similar animals, specially the white horse in the centre in the Battle of St. Egidio by Paolo Uccello in the National Gallery, is somewhat conventionalised, but yet is a rare example of expressive skill. Additional evidence is the magnificent elephant, painted very close to it, illustrating the transportation of Sundara to his heaven, with Cheramān following on the elephant.

Higher up and somewhat apart is a typical early Choḷa shrine of Naṭarāja in the vicinity of which are seated princely devotees. Further down is narrated the story of Śiva who came in the guise of an old man, with a document in his hand, to prove his right and claim Sundara to take him away on his marriage day to his abode at Tiruveṇṇainallūr. Below this is the scene of marriage festivity.

On the other side of the wall beyond, there is a large figure of Naṭāraja dancing in the hall of Chidambaram, with priests and devotees on one side and a royal figure, obviously Rājarāja and three of his queens, with a large train of attendants (Fig. 43), adoring the Lord. On the opposite walls, close by, are some charming miniature figures of women. A little beyond is Rājarāja with his *guru* Karuvūr Devar (Fig. 44).

Beyond this, on the wall opposite the northern one, are five heads (Fig. 42) peeping out of a partially exposed layer of Choḷa painting. The long and lustrous eyes, the elevated nose in perfect relief, the sweet and graceful lips, the lovely chin and full cheeks, the arched brows and the ringlets of hair, the beautiful curved ears and the singularly attractive neck, are typical of the conception of beauty of

Fig. 42. Faces of celestials, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Tañjāvūr

Fig. 43. Chola warriors, Chola, 1000 A.D., Tañjāvūr

semi-divine form. As for the ornamentation here, little need be said of it in detail, as a look at the crown speaks eloquently on the point.

On the northern wall, the whole space is occupied by a gigantic figure of Tripurāntaka on a chariot driven by Brahmā. Śiva is shown in the *ālīḍha* pose of a warrior with eight arms fully equipped with weapons, using his mighty bow to overcome the Asuras, a host of whom the painter has depicted opposite, with fierce indomitable spirit, clearly portrayed in their attitude, fierce eyes, flaming hair and up-raised weapons, daunted by nothing, little caring for the pleas and tears of their women, who cling to them in fear and despair. Less as aides and more as companions of Śiva are shown Kārttikeya on his peacock, Gaṇeśa on the mouse and Kāli, the war goddess, on her lion; Nandi is shown complacently quiet in front of the chariot. This is a great masterpiece of Choḷa art. The figure of Tripurāntaka (Frontispiece), in the *ālīḍha* (warrior) pose in the Pallava tradition. is seated, and this is a remarkable specimen continuing the earlier mode. It recalls the famous imagery of Śiva in his Tripurāntaka form by Kālidāsa, where Raghu is likened 'to the Destroyer of the Tripuras in warrior pose': *atishṭhadālīḍhaviśeshaśobhinā vapuḥprakarsheṇa viḍambiteśvaraḥ*. The paintings in the Bṛihadīśvara temple constitute the most valuable document on the painter's art during the time of the early Choḷas, all the grace of classical painting observed at Sittannavāśal, Panamalai and Kāñchīpuram being continued in this fine series.

The Choḷa paintings reveal to us the life, the grandeur and the culture of Choḷa times. Special stress is laid on Naṭāraja in his *sabhā* or hall of dance, as a favourite deity of the Choḷas. The military vision and ideals of the Choḷas in general, and of Rājarāja in particular, are symbolised in the great masterpiece of Tripurāntaka.

The colours are subdued, the lines firm and sinewy, the expressions true to life, and above all

the contour of these figures reveals an ease which has charm. They more than amply fulfil the dictum of the Āchāryas of old that *rekhā*, line drawing (graceful drawing of a picture in line) is praiseworthy, as the *Vishṇudharmottara* puts it. But these paintings have more than graceful line. They please all tastes. The element of *bhūshaṇa*, ornamentation, which is so dear to women, is in such rich profusion on these walls that one stares in wonder at the wealth of imagination and the inventive skill of those responsible for such glorious creations. A look at the dancers, the crowns of the five princes and the rich trappings of the horse would show what a conspicuous part ornamentation plays in Choḷa art. As for the element of *varṇa*, colour, that captivates popular taste, even the remnants of faded colour that still stick to these walls are enough to help the play of our imagination in trying to recall how bright and fresh they must have been in the days when the Choḷa monarchs gazed proudly on them.

Fig. 44. Rājarāja and Karuvūrār, Choḷa, 1000 A.D., Tañjāvūr

If expression has to be taken as the criterion, by which a great art has to be judged, it is here in abundance in these Choḷa paintings. The sentiment of heroism—*vīra rasa*—is clearly seen in Tripurāntaka's face and form; the figures and attitude of the Rākshasas determined to fight Śiva and the wailing tear-stained faces of their women, clinging to them in despair, suggest an emotion of pity—*karuṇā*—and terror—*raudra;* Śiva as Dakshiṇāmūrti, seated calm and serene, is the mirror of peace—*śānta;* the hands in the *vismaya* of the dancer suggests the spirit of wonder—*adbhuta;* the dwarf Gaṇas, in comic attitude, playing the drum and keeping time, represent *hāsya*. The commingling of emotions is complete in the large Tripurāntaka panel which is a jumble of *vīra*, *raudra* and *karuṇā*.

Hoysaḷa

11th-13th centuries A.D.

THE Hoysaḷas were a dynasty of rulers in western Mysore, claiming descent from the Yādavas. Their ancient capital was Dorasamudra, called Dvāravatīpura in their inscriptions. Their name is derived from an incident narrated about their ancestor Saḷa. According to this story, a sage commanded him, at the appearance of a tiger, to slay it in these words 'Poysaḷa' (strike, Saḷa). Thus the dynasty got its name Poysaḷa or Hoysaḷa. The Hoysaḷas were originally feudatories of the Western Chāḷukyas.

Vinayāditya was their first noteworthy king. His grandson Biṭṭideva or Biṭṭiga, was a mighty monarch, who made the dynasty independent. He had been a Jain; and was converted to Hinduism by Rāmānuja, the great religious master of the 12th century, who left the Choḷa territory for a more con-
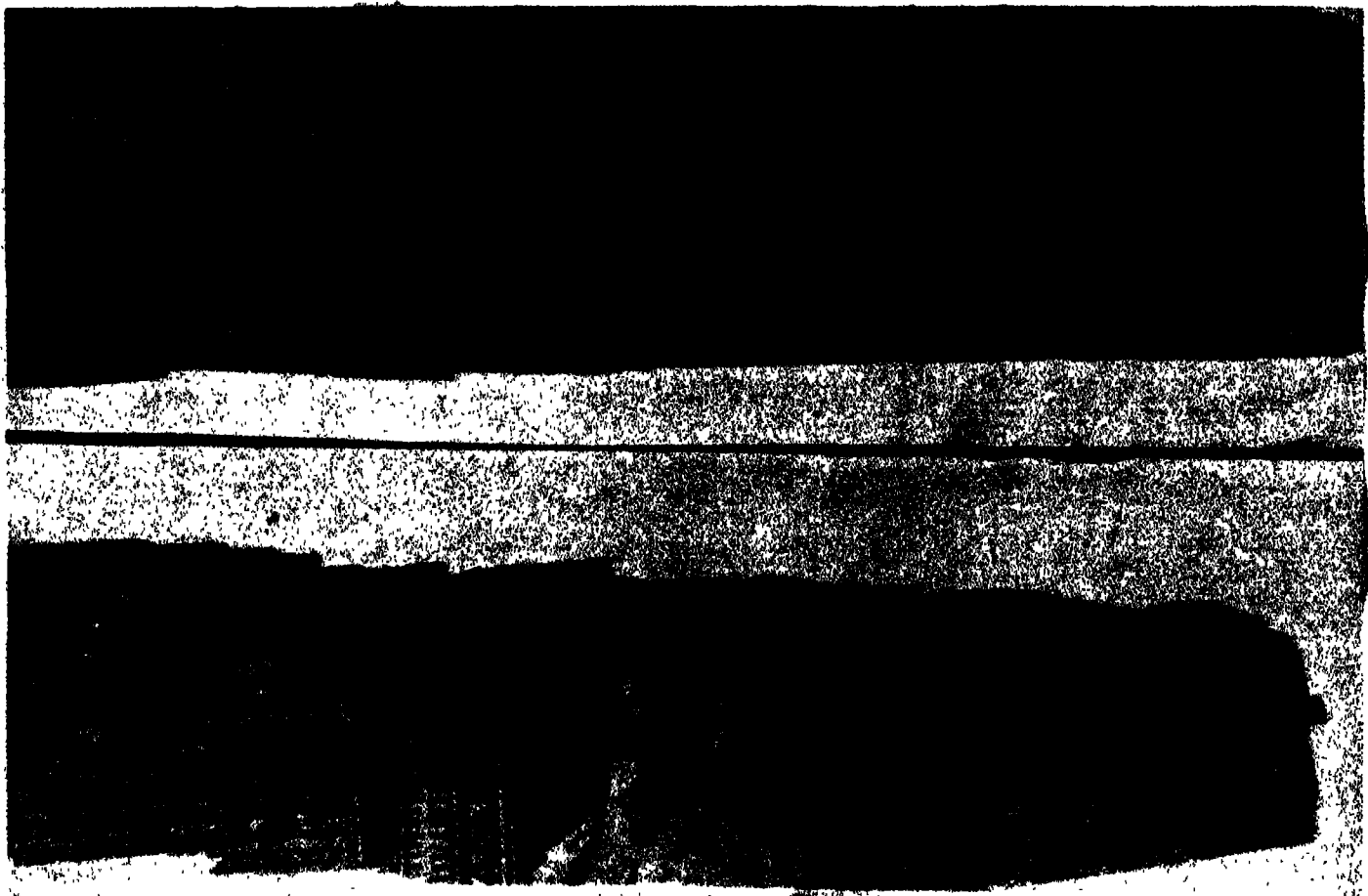
Fig. 45. Kālī and devotees, Manuscript painting, Hoysaḷa, 12th century, Courtesy of Jaina Basadi, Moodbidri

genial atmosphere in the realm of his enthusiastic disciple, now named Vishṇuvardhana. The newly converted king built beautiful temples and embellished them with the finest art of the period under the inspiration of the great religious reformer. The temple at Belur, a gem of Hoysaḷa art, is his creation. There is a beautiful portrait of the king with his distinguished Jaina queen Śāntalā, seated beside him, on a carved lithic screen. Here the king, a devout Vaishṇavite, had as wife a queen dedicated to the faith of the Tīrthaṅkaras, just as the Ikshvāku sovereigns, of the Brahmanical faith, had princesses in the family devoted to Buddha. His ministers and likewise generals, like Gaṅgarāja and Hulli Daṇḍanāyaka were devout followers of the Jaina faith.

A great king after Vishṇuvardhana was Ballāla II or Vīra Ballāla, as he was known. His son, Narasimha II, and Someśvara, after him, were the only other noteworthy monarchs, as later the kingdom slowly crumbled until it received its death blow from Malik Kafur, the General of Ala-ud-din Khilji.

Though the sculptural wealth of the Hoysaḷas is very well known through the magnificent examples of architecture and sculpture all over their realm, no example of the painter's art has been discovered so far. Though no murals have been noticed in any of the temples, fortunately there are specimens of painting of the Hoysaḷa period from their territory preserved for us in Moodbidri. These are painted
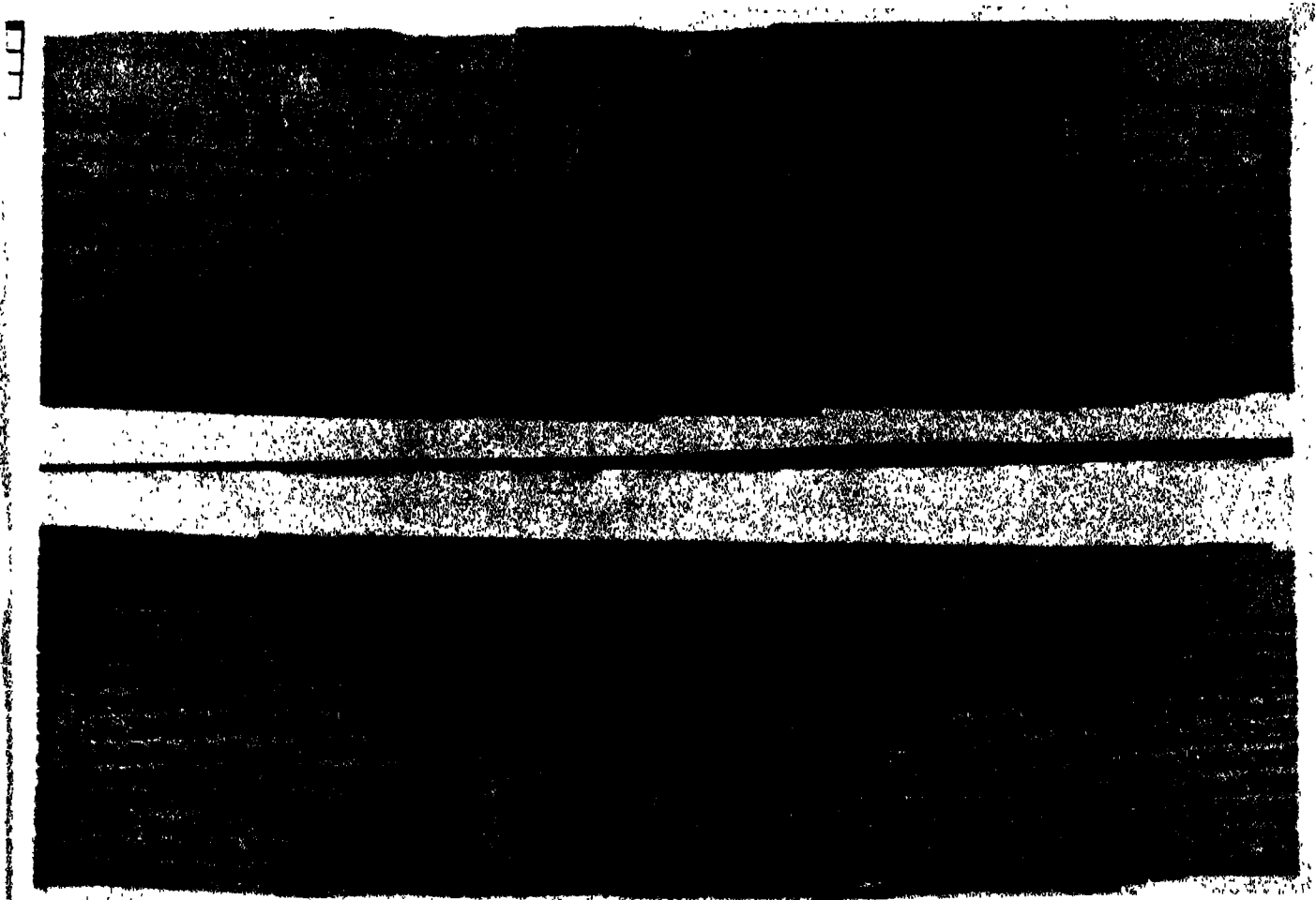
Fig. 46. Seated and Standing Mahāvīra, Manuscript painting, Hoysaḷa, 12th century, Courtesy of Jaina Basadi, Moodbidri
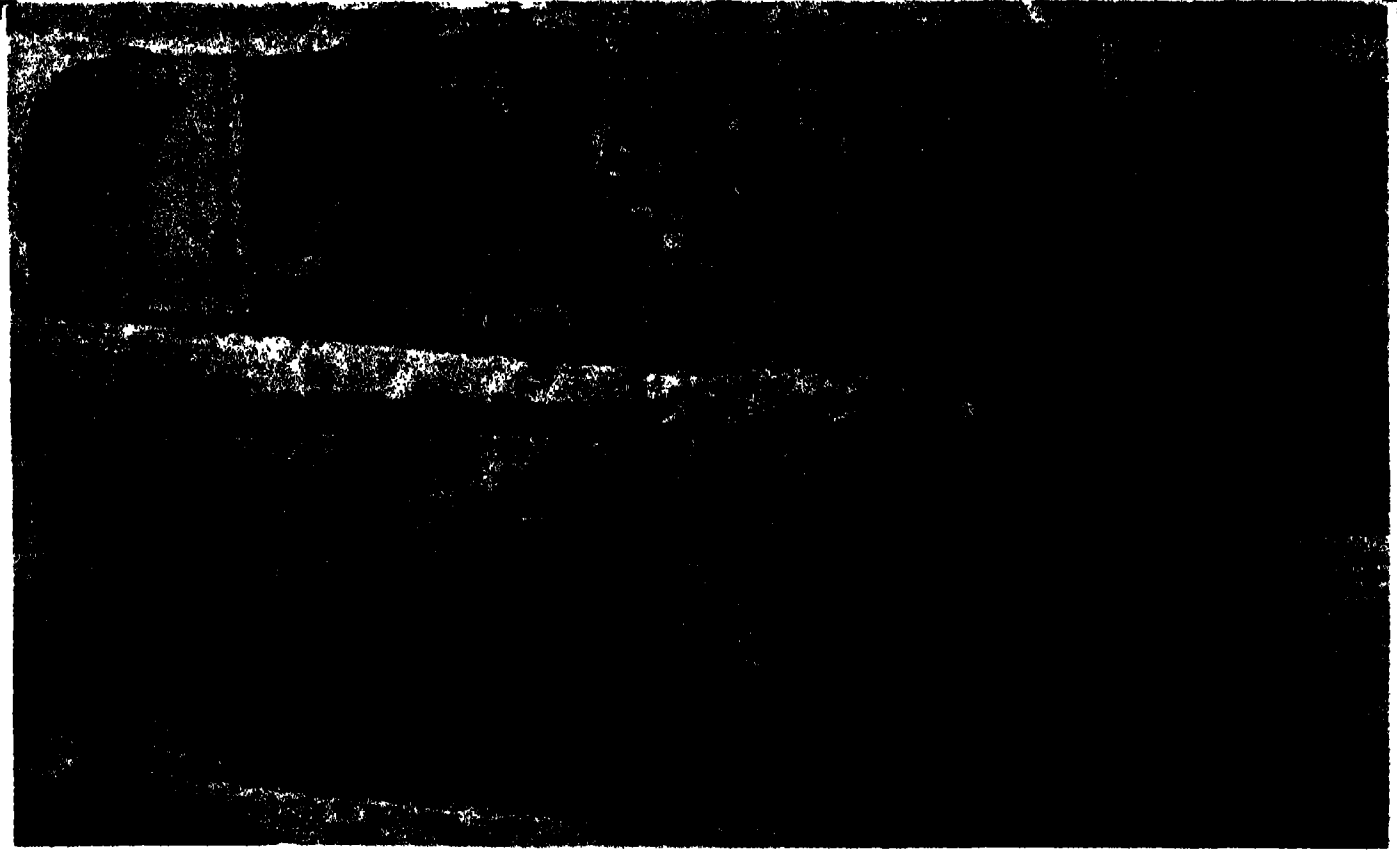
Fig. 47. Pārśvanātha flanked by Dharaṇendra and Padmāvatī and Śrutadevī, Manuscript painting, Hoysaḷa, 12th century, Courtesy of Jaina Basadi, Moodbidri

palm leaf manuscripts at the Jain pontifical seat at Moodbidri, and are objects of worship. They compose the commentaries of Vīrasena known as *Dhavalā* and *Jayadhavalā* and *Mahādhavalā* or *Mahābandha* of the originaltext of *Shaṭkhaṇḍāgama. Dhavalā*, *Jayadhavalā* and *Mahādhavalā* preserve surviving portions of the original Jain canon of 12 *aṅgas*, according to Digambara tradition. *Dhavalā* is the commentary on *Shaṭkhaṇḍāgama*, wherein the story of the composition of the latter is narrated in the introductory portion. The teachings of Mahāvīra, arranged into 12 *aṅgas* by his pupil, Indrabhūti Gautama, were handed down by oral tradition, and were neglected to such an extent that they had to be revived. Guṇadhara (1st century B.C.) and Dharasena (1st century A.D.) were the two great Āchāryas, who preserved whatever was available of the teachings of Mahāvīra, in their respective works on Jaina Karma philosophy, known as *Kashāyapāhuḍa* and *Shaṭkhaṇḍāgama*. The last of a series of commentaries on the *Shaṭkhaṇḍāgama* is the *Dhavalā*. Its author, Vīrasena, also wrote the commentary on *Kashāyapāhuḍa* known as the *Jayadhavalā*. The date of the *Dhavalā* is 816, during the time of the Rāshṭrakūṭa King, Amoghavarsha I. My attention was drawn to these illustrated manuscripts some years ago by my esteemed friend Mr. Chhotelal Jain, through whose good offices these painted leaves were received on loan for a manuscripts exhibition at the National Museum, in January, 1964, when they were photographed in colour.
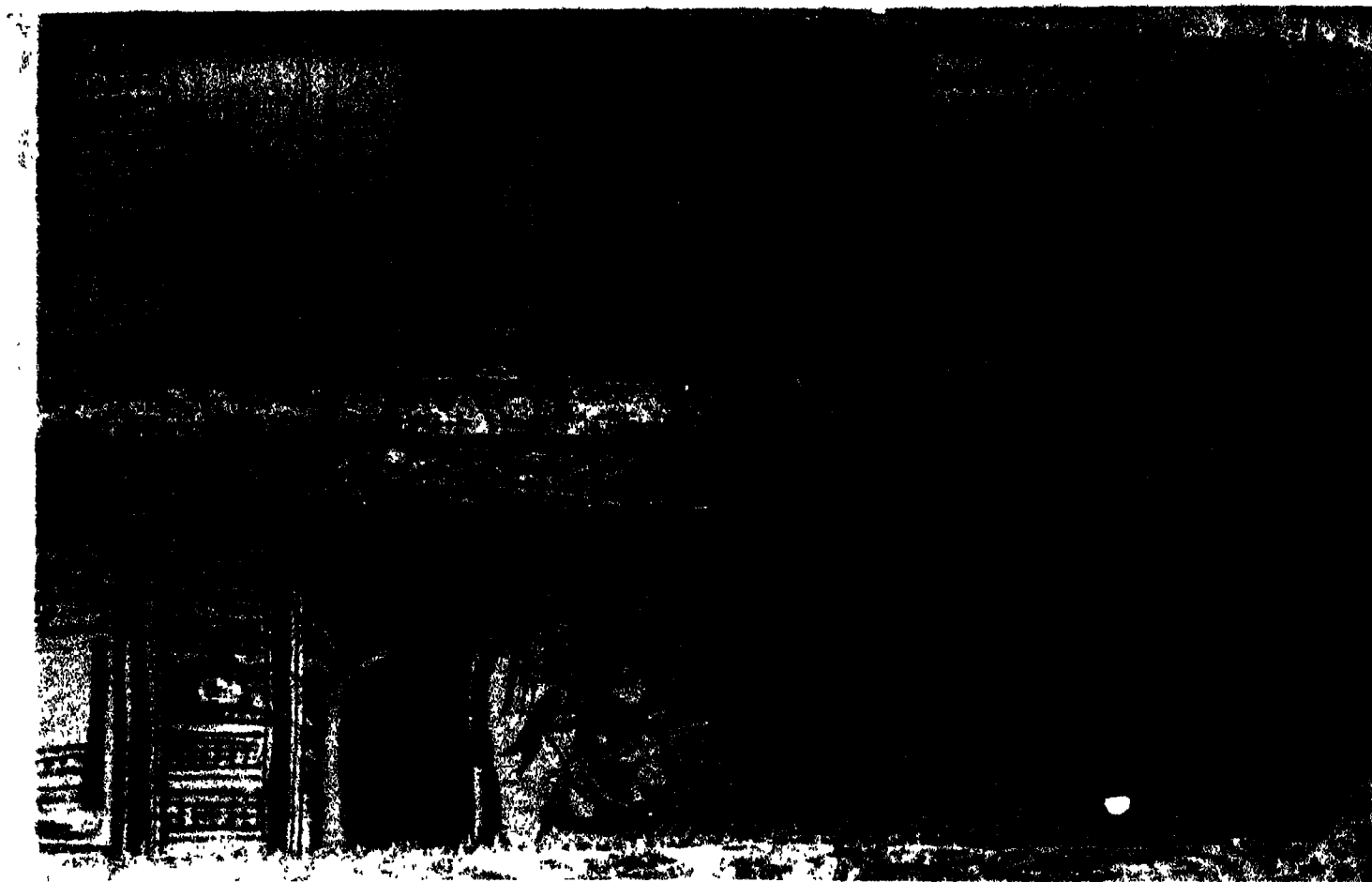
Fig. 48. Bāhubali flanked by sisters and Śrutadevī, Manuscript painting, Hoysaḷa, 12th century, Courtesy of Jaina Basadi, Moodbidri

These manuscripts, fortunately, have been well taken care of in the ancient library at Moodbidri. By their palaeography, clearly of the Hoysaḷa period, and, closely resembling the lithic as well as the copper-plate inscriptions of Vishṇuvardhana's time, they have survived, with their paintings of quality in bright colour, to give us an idea of the art of the Hoysaḷa painter. It is interesting to compare the writing in these manuscripts, with the letters composing the flowery lines in the metal plates from the Belūr Temple. These paintings must be attributed to the time of Vishṇuvardhana and his wife, Śāntalā, who was so devoted to Jainism.

These paintings, on unusually large palm leaves, are important both for the beauty of the letters composing the text and the illustrations that accompany it. Two of the leaves with letters rather thickened, with a greater delicacy than in the case of the rest, with a soft tone reducing all effect of contrast in colours and with outlines drawn in very pleasing proportions, appear the earliest among these paintings. This manuscript of the *Dhavalā* is dated 1113. Here is presented the Yakshī Kālī of Supārśvanātha who, however, is of fair complexion contrary to her name (Fig. 45). Her vehicle, the bull, is also present. The flexion of her body and the sinuous lines composing the figures are remarkable. Similarly, the devotees on one side, probably royal devotees, including the king, queen and the prince, are drawn and painted with great delicacy. These are towards the end of the leaves. The central paintings on both the
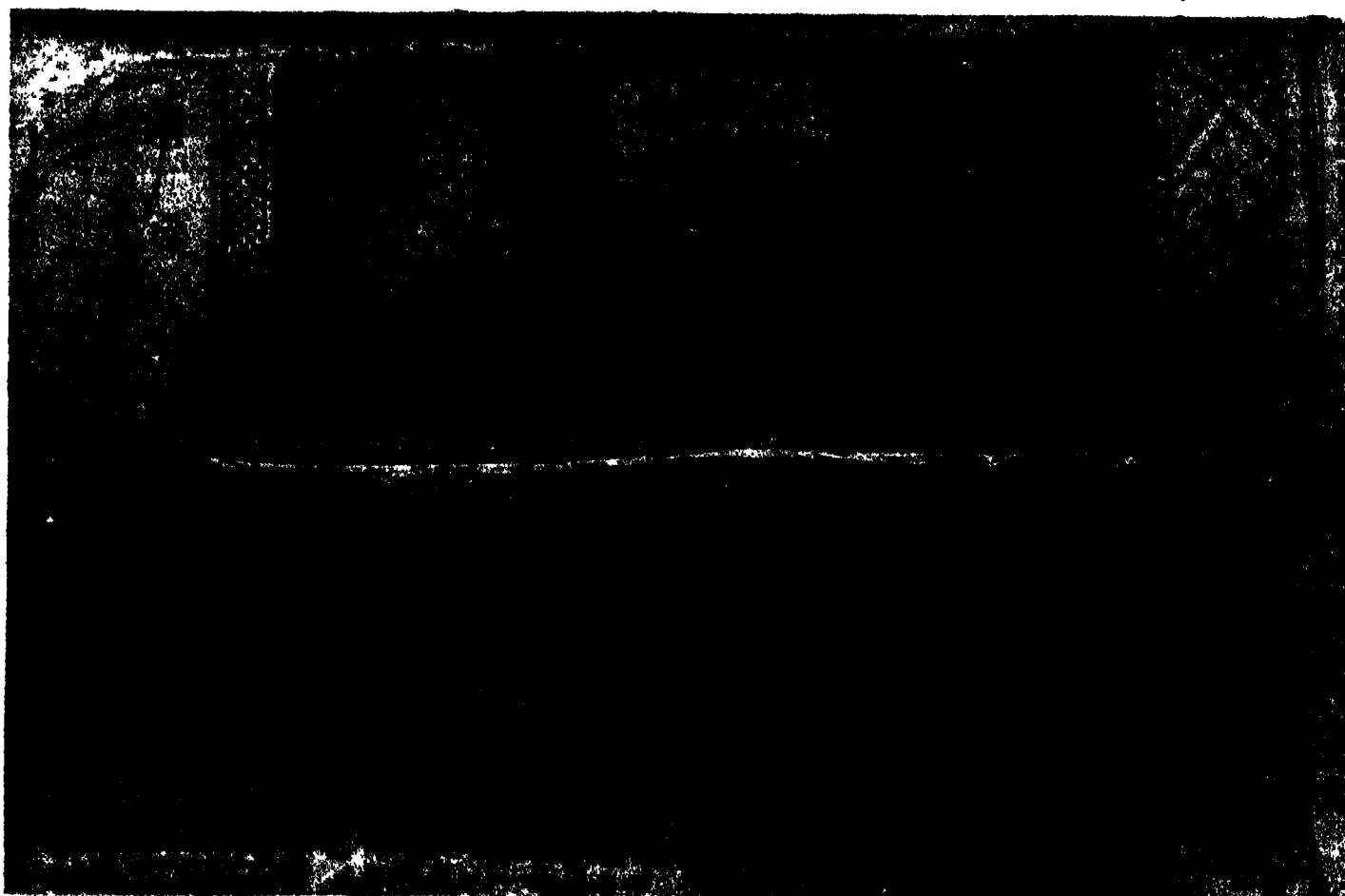
Fig. 49. Supārśvanātha and Yakshiṇī Ambikā, Manuscript painting, Hoysaḷa, 12th century, Courtesy of Jaina Basadi, Moodbidri

leaves are a standing and a seated *Tīrthaṅkara*—Mahāvira (Fig. 46). Though it is very difficult to handle a theme so simple as that of a figure in the nude like a *Tīrthaṅkara,* the painter has made them both truly artistic creations and the figures are most pleasing from the aesthetic point of view. The elaborate seat, with *makara* decorated back and rearing lions, is beautifully matched by the *chaurī*-bearers on either side in pleasing proportions and flexions. This painting at once recalls that masterpiece of early Choḷa workmanship, the Nāgapaṭṭiṇam Buddha, with Nāgarāja *chaurī*-bearers on either side. The painting is almost monochrome here, but it has a wonderful effect, as a painting of volume brought out with great mastery.

Of the other leaves, one end of a leaf presents Pārśvanātha, with snake hoods over his head, seated on a lion throne, *chaurī*-bearers in attendance on either side, and with Dharaṇendra Yaksha on one side and Padmāvatī Yakshiṇī on the other (Fig. 47). One end of another leaf presents Śrutadevī in the centre (Fig 47), with female *chaurī*-bearers on either side, drawn with elegance and ease; the flexion, the coiffure, the turn of the face and the twist of the neck, the crossing of the legs, are all very elegant. An almost similar painting, equally effective, is towards the end of another leaf. In the same style has been presented the theme of Bāhubali (Fig. 48), who turned ascetic and allowed creepers to grow and entwine around his legs. His sisters are shown on either side, as in the panel at Ellora depicting the same theme. The

Fig. 50. Pārśvanātha and Mātaṅga Yaksha, Manuscript painting, Hoysaḷa, 12th century, Courtesy of Jaina Basadi, Moodbidri

painting here is an effective presentation of a great theme, just as the colossus at Śravaṇabeḷagoḷa is the best of Bāhubali figures in stone, while the most beautiful metal one is that in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.

Yakshiṇī Ambikā, who is very popular in Jaina art, is presented here under the mango tree with her two children and the lion (Fig. 49). One of the boys is enjoying a ride on the lion while the younger one is very close to his mother. The theme of devotees adoring Pārśvanātha (Fig. 50) and Supārśvanātha (Fig. 49) is presented in very simple fashion as the theme does not lend itself to greater elaboration. On the other hand, such themes as Mātaṅga Yaksha (Fig. 50), with his vehicle, the elephant, sitting majestically with its head lifted up, looking defiance, the whole picture arranged artistically between two trees, interesting for their conventional patterns, are very pleasing. Śrutadevī, with her peacock (Fig. 51) or Mahāmānasī (Fig. 52), with her swan, and Yaksha Ajita (Fig, 52), on his tortoise, are all delightfully artistic creations of the Hoysaḷa painters' brush. The floriated tail of the bird and the delineation of the contours of the figures reflect great artistic taste and creative talent.

Even the borders in these manuscripts are done with great elegance. There is no repetition anywhere, though innumerable floral patterns have been painted on various leaves. They arrest attention by the high quality of their design.

Fig. 51. Śrutadevī, Manuscript painting, Hoysaḷa, 12th century, Courtesy of Jaina Basadi, Moodbidri

Fig. 52. Yaksha Ajita and Mahāmānasī, Manuscript painting, Hoysaḷa, 12th century, Courtesy of Jaina Basadi, Moodbidri

Kākatīya

11th-13th centuries A.D.

THE Kākatīyas of Warangal were originally feudatories of the Western Chāḷukyas, and later became independent rulers. They followed the art traditions of the later Chāḷukyas of Kalyāṇī. They were greatly interested in art and, with their devotion for Śiva, they were responsible for several temples dedicated to this deity in various parts of their realm. Prola II and his son, Rudradeva, great heroes, who built up the Kākatīya power, and still later Gaṇapatideva, are outstanding figures in the 12th century. Kākatīya Rudrāmbā, the daughter of Gaṇapatideva, and her grandson and successor, Pratāparudradeva, were powerful sovereigns and the 12th and 13th centuries constituted in Andhra an enlightened period of prosperity and culture. *Pratāparudrayaśobhūshaṇa*, a popular book on rhetoric, by Vidyānātha, has glorified Pratāparudradeva, as the earlier *Harshacharita* of Bāṇa gives a glowing account of Harsha. The great monuments of the realm testify to the attainments of the sculptor during the time of the Kākatīyas. Those at Warangal, Pālampet, Anamkoṇḍa, Tripurāntakam, Mācharla and other places are very well known.

The painting of the time of the Kākatīyas was not less effective than their sculpture. With the entire surface of the *maṇḍapa* and cell painted, the large temple on the hill at Tripurāntakam is one of the most important monuments of the Kākatīya period for the study of painting. Similarly, at Pillalamaṛṛi, there are Kākatīya paintings.

One of them represents the famous *Amṛitamanthana* scene (Fig. 53), with the Devas on one side and the Asuras on the other, holding Vāsuki, as a string wound around the mountain Mandara, that acted as the churn-stick with which the milky ocean was churned in order to obtain the elixir of life. This noble theme first appears as a favourite sculptured motif in the Gupta period at Udayagiri, near Bhilsa, in the cave temple there, where it is background for presenting the goddess of prosperity on the door lintel. This is continued in sculpture by the Western Chāḷukyas, as there is a frequent repetition of *Amṛitamanthana* at Bādāmī. It is exactly in the same manner, as in the early Chāḷukya monuments, that this *Amṛitamanthana* scene is carved in the late Chāḷukya as well as in the Kākatīya monuments. At Mācharla this theme occurs in sculpture in a Kākatīya temple there. The interest of the painting at Pillalamaṛṛi lies not only in its being one of the rare Kākatīya paintings preserved, but also in its presenting the only medieval version in colour of this theme.

Fig. 53. Amṛitamanthana, Kākatīya, 12th century, Pillalamaṛṛi Temple

The vast treasure-house of Kākatīya painting at Tripurāntakam still awaits detailed study, but unfortunately the place is so inaccessible and the stay there so difficult that it has discouraged visits to the temple and a sojourn for study.

Vijayanagara

14th-17th centuries A.D.

THE Vijayanagara empire, established in 1335 A.D. by Harihara, Kampa and Bukka, sons of Saṅgama, grew to be the dominant power in the South. Prauḍhadevarāya, an able sovereign, whose glory greatly impressed the Persian envoy Abdul Razaak, ruled in the first half of the 15th century.

The empire established for the propagation of *dharma* and for support of Hindu ideals, and reinforced by the blessings of the great sage, Vidyātīrtha, grew in strength and spread dharmic and religious institutions. A new impetus was given to temple building, and in the large empire, which embraced Āndhra, Karṇāṭa, Drāviḍa, Kerala and Mahārāshṭra in its scope, touching even Orissa, the Vijayanagara style of architecture, sculpture and painting, was forged. It fused various elements of Chāḷukya and Choḷa art, though the Drāviḍa element predominated. It was thus a continuation of the early Choḷa and late Pāṇḍyan traditions, combining to some extent, in the Canarese and Telugu districts, Chāḷukya traditions that earlier had firm roots there.

Undoubtedly the greatest ruler of this dynasty was Kṛishṇadevarāya, of the Tuḷuva family, who was not only an able statesman, ruler and warrior, but also a great scholar and patron of the fine arts. He was himself the composer of several works in Telugu, including the famous *Āmuktamālyada*, the Telugu rendering of the story of Vishṇuchitta's daughter, Āṇḍāḷ. This work is supposed to have been written by this great emperor, devotee of the Lord of the Seven Hills, at the behest of the Lord Himself, conveyed to him in a dream. The story of how he brought the image of Bālakṛishṇa from his successful military campaign at Udayagiri, built a temple for the deity at Hampi and installed it with great pomp, issuing special gold coins with the figure of Bālakṛishṇa imprinted on them, as narrated in the inscriptions on the walls of the temple itself, is only a confirmation of both the religious zeal and the artistic taste of the king. The most marvellous temple at Hampi of his time, the Viṭṭhala, was, the story goes, prepared for receiving the famous deity of Paṇḍarpūr, but He in gracious accord with the request of the tearful devotees of Paṇḍarpūr, appeared in a dream to Kṛishṇadevarāya, to disapprove his removal of the image for consecration at Hampi. Almost every large *gopura* in the South is mistaken for a Rāyalagopura, as quite a large number of them were built by Kṛishṇadevarāya himself. Like Aśoka, who was reputed to be the builder of 84,000 *stūpas*, Kṛishṇadevarāya was credited with more *gopuras* than he could have ever completed. The fact, however, remains that he was a great patron of literature and art and both flourished during his reign. The famous Portuguese traveller, Paes, who visited the emperor's capital, has nothing but praise for Vijayanagara works of art.
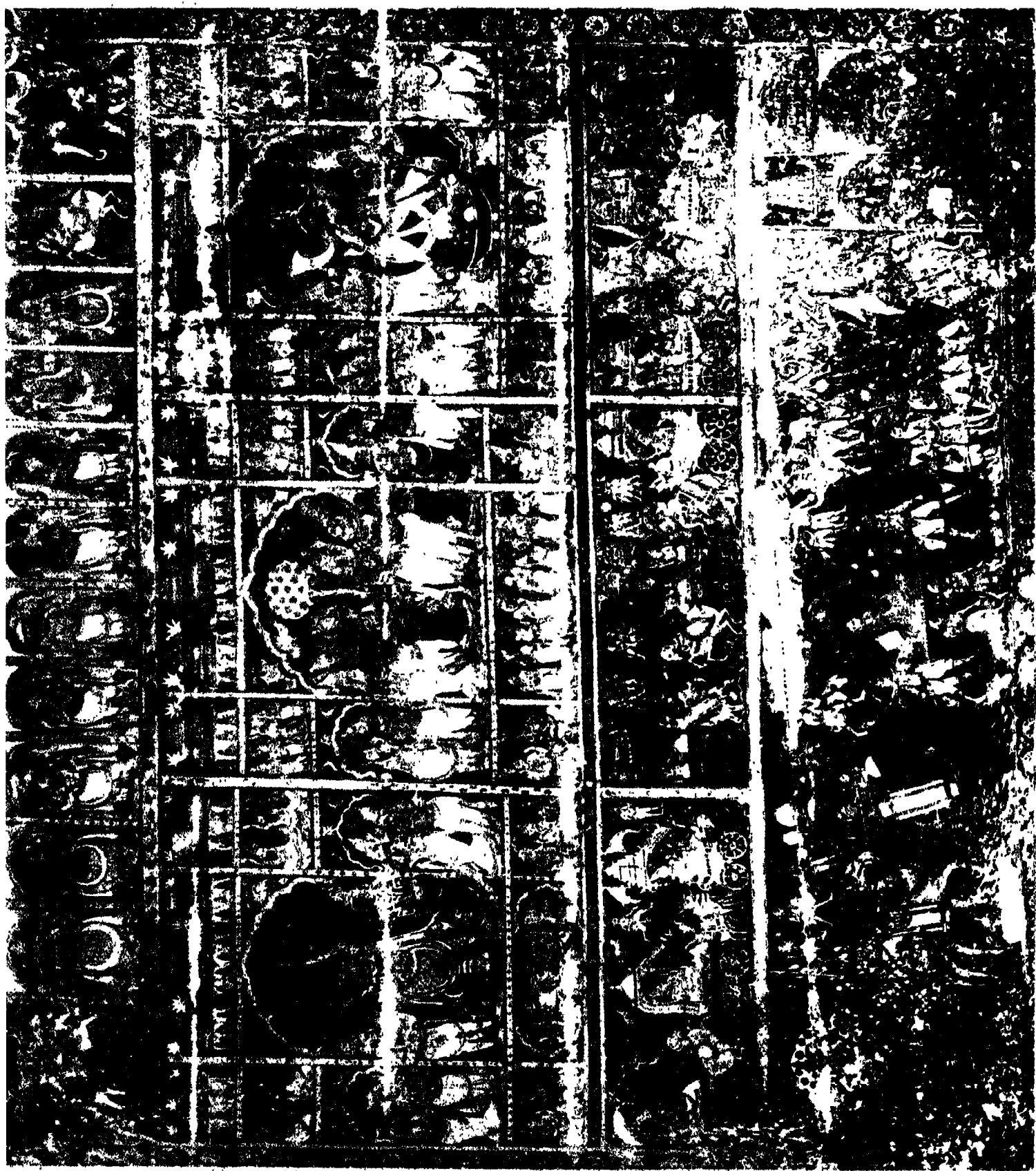
Fig. 54. Painting on ceiling of Virūpāksha Temple, Vijayanagara, 15th century, Hampi

Fig. 55. Detail of 54, Vidyāraṇya's procession, Vijayanagara, 15th century, Hampi
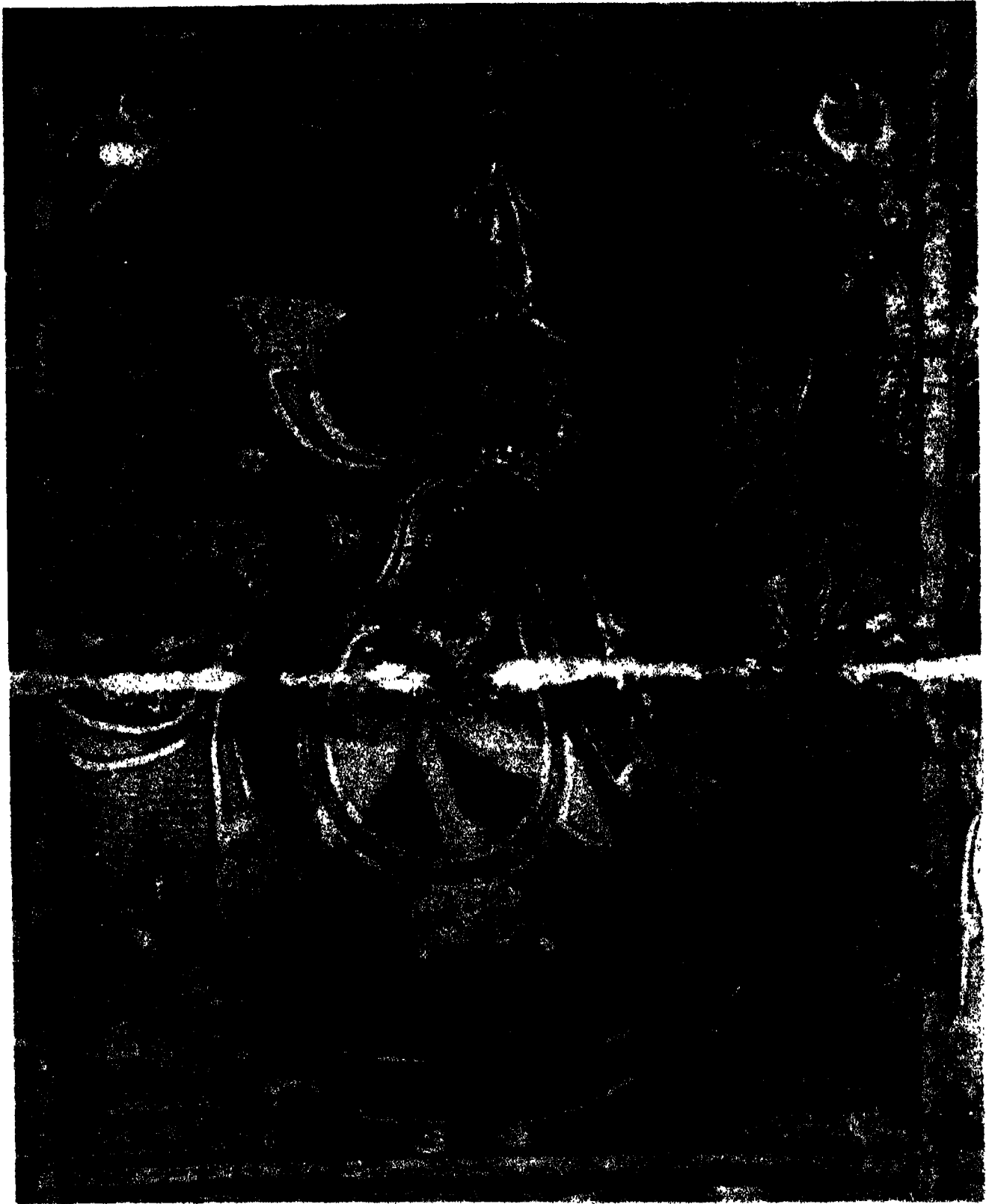
Fig. 56. Detail of 54, Arjuna's archery contest, Vijayanagara, 15th century, Hampi

The glory of the empire continued during the time of Achyutarāya, brother of Kṛishṇadeva-rāya. It had a great revival owing to the military genius and valour of Aliya Rāmarāya, son-in-law of Kṛishṇadevarāya, who looked after the empire on behalf of the titular emperors. The battle of Talikoṭa greatly weakened it, and started its decline.

The large *gopuras* and *maṇḍapas* in temples in South India mark the Vijayanagara period. The *maṇḍapas* in the temples of Vīrabhadra at Lepākshī, of Varadarāja at Kāñchīpuram, of Viṭṭhala at Hampi, of Jalakaṇṭheśvara at Vellore, of Raṅga-nātha at Śrīraṅgam, are all excellent examples of Vijayanagara work.

The Vijayanagara empire represents the last great phase of Indian history and culture. Painting, like every other art, was encouraged during this time and there are innumerable temples all over South India with paintings representing this period.

There are fragments of paintings at Ane-gundi, near Hampi, in the temples at Tāḍpatri, Kāñchīpuram, Kālahasti, Tirupati, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, Chidambaram, Tiruvālūr, Kumbakoṇam, Śrīraṅgam and other places, belonging both to the Vijayanagara and to the Nāyaka periods.

Painting of the early phase of the Vijaya-nagara empire can be seen in the *Saṅgīta-maṇḍapa* of the Vardhamāna Temple at Tirupparutti-kuṇram. Though these are fragments, they are extremely interesting, not only from the point of view of the themes that they portray, but also by the special place they occupy in the study of painting of the Vijayanagara period. Built by Irugappa, the minister and general of Bukkarāya II, and devoted follower of the Jaina faith, these paintings represent workmanship towards the end of the 14th century. The themes chosen for depiction are from the life of Vardhamāna. The nativity scene in the story of this Tīrthaṅkara presents his mother, Priya-kāminī, in labour. One cannot but recall similar representations of child-birth, presented a couple

Fig. 57. Arjuna's archery contest, Hoysaḷa, 12th century, Belur

Fig. 58. Andhakāntaka Śiva, Vijayanagara, 16th century, Lepākshī

of centuries later, both at Chidambaram in a Nāyaka series and in temples and palaces in Kerala, in the narration of the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, where the queens of Daśaratha are similarly depicted. The bath and the ceremony of anointing of the child by Saudharmendra, accompanied by his wife Śachī, is painted with elegance and is quite typical in every respect of the form, deportment, ornamentation and decoration of the period. Equally interesting is Saudharmendra's dance before Vardhamāna, with the legs crossed in *pādasvastika*.

In the Virūpāksha Temple at the capital of the empire, the ceiling of the large front *maṇḍapa* has a magnificent series of paintings (Figs. 54 and 61). Here is a great masterpiece presenting Vidyāraṇya, the great spiritual master, who was responsible for the building of the Vijayanagara empire in its earliest stages. The long procession, with Vidyāraṇya in a palanquin, preceded and followed by a large retinue, including elephants, camels, cavalry, trumpeters, banner-bearers and other hosts, is an impressive scene of the 14th century, recorded a century later (Fig. 55).

Beyond this are three magnificent groups, one presenting the famous archery test of Arjuna (Fig. 56), hitting the fast moving piscine target, that won him the hand of Draupadī, the stringing of the mighty bow of Śiva by Rāma, that brought him Śītā as his bride; and the happy wedding of Rāma (Fig. 59) and his brothers, with Sītā and the princesses of Janaka's family. Further up is a row of panels giving the incarnation of Vishṇu. Tripurāntaka (Fig. 62) and Madanāntaka (Fig. 63) are in the characteristic Vijayanagara style, so different from the same themes at Ellora and Gaṅgaikoṇḍacholapuram.

Fig. 59. Detail of 54, Rāma's marriage, Virūpāksha Temple, Vijayanagara, 15th century, Hampi

The scene of Arjuna's archery recalls identical sculptural representations in Hoysaḷa art (Fig. 57) and indicates clearly how long-lived are great traditions and popular themes, in art as in literature.

At Lepākshī, in Anantapur district, there is a temple of considerable importance, with a whole series of paintings giving the best report on Vijayanagara painting in the sixteenth century. Though now an insignificant spot, it was a great centre of trade and pilgrimage in the days of the Vijayanagara emperors. The brothers, Virūpaṇṇa Nāyaka and Vīraṇṇa, who were chieftains ruling this area, created this beautiful temple. Virūpaṇṇa was the son of Nandilakkiseṭṭi of Penukoṇḍa and was specially devoted to Vīrabhadra. Inscriptions of the time of Achyutarāya, inscribed on the walls of the temple, give particulars about the neighbourhood, the temple and the devoted brothers. Three shrines are mentioned in the inscriptions. A shrine of Śiva faces that of Vishṇu, while further up in the centre is the sanctum of Śrī Vīrabhadra, the principal deity here. They thus form a triangle with a common *maṇḍapa* in the centre, of which the ceiling has painted on it an extraordinarily large figure of Vīrabhadra with his devotees, Virūpaṇṇa and Vīraṇṇa, beside him.

The most interesting and beautiful part of the building is undoubtedly the *maṇḍapa* adjoining the inner *gopura* and the rather narrow *ardhamaṇḍapa*. The *Nāṭyamaṇḍapa* is a charming work with dancing figures, drummers and divine musicians carved on every pillar. Music and dance are suggested by the figure of Brahmā playing the drum, Tumburu thrumming the strings of the *vīṇā*, Nandikeśvara playing the *huḍukka*, the divine dance master sounding the cymbals, the nymph, Rambhā, dancing, and Śiva in the pleasant *bhujaṅgatrāsita* pose. In the inner *maṇḍapa* also there are elegant carvings of Gajāntaka, dancing Gaṇapati and Durgā. The paintings in this temple were noticed by A. H. Longhurst, in 1912-13, but no serious notice was taken of them. The entire *nāṭyamaṇḍapa* was once painted in bright colours, but the paintings here, which are large-sized scenes from the *Mahābhārata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Purāṇas*, including a representation of baby Kṛishṇa as *Vaṭapatraśāyī*, resting on a pipal leaf, sucking the toe of his foot, raised to his mouth with both his hands, *karāravindeva padāravindam mukhāravinde viniveśayantam vaṭasya patrasya puṭe śayānam bālam mukundam manasā smarāmi:* 'I meditate on baby Mukunda, reclining on a banyan leaf, reaching his foot soft as lotus, with his lotus-like hands, to his lotus-red lips' (*Mukundamālā*) as Kulaśekharāḷvār gives it. These scenes of the marriage of Pārvatī; Dakshiṇāmūrti (Fig. 68); Rāma's coronation, Arjuna

Fig. 60. Band of geese, Vijayanagara, 16th century, Lepākshī
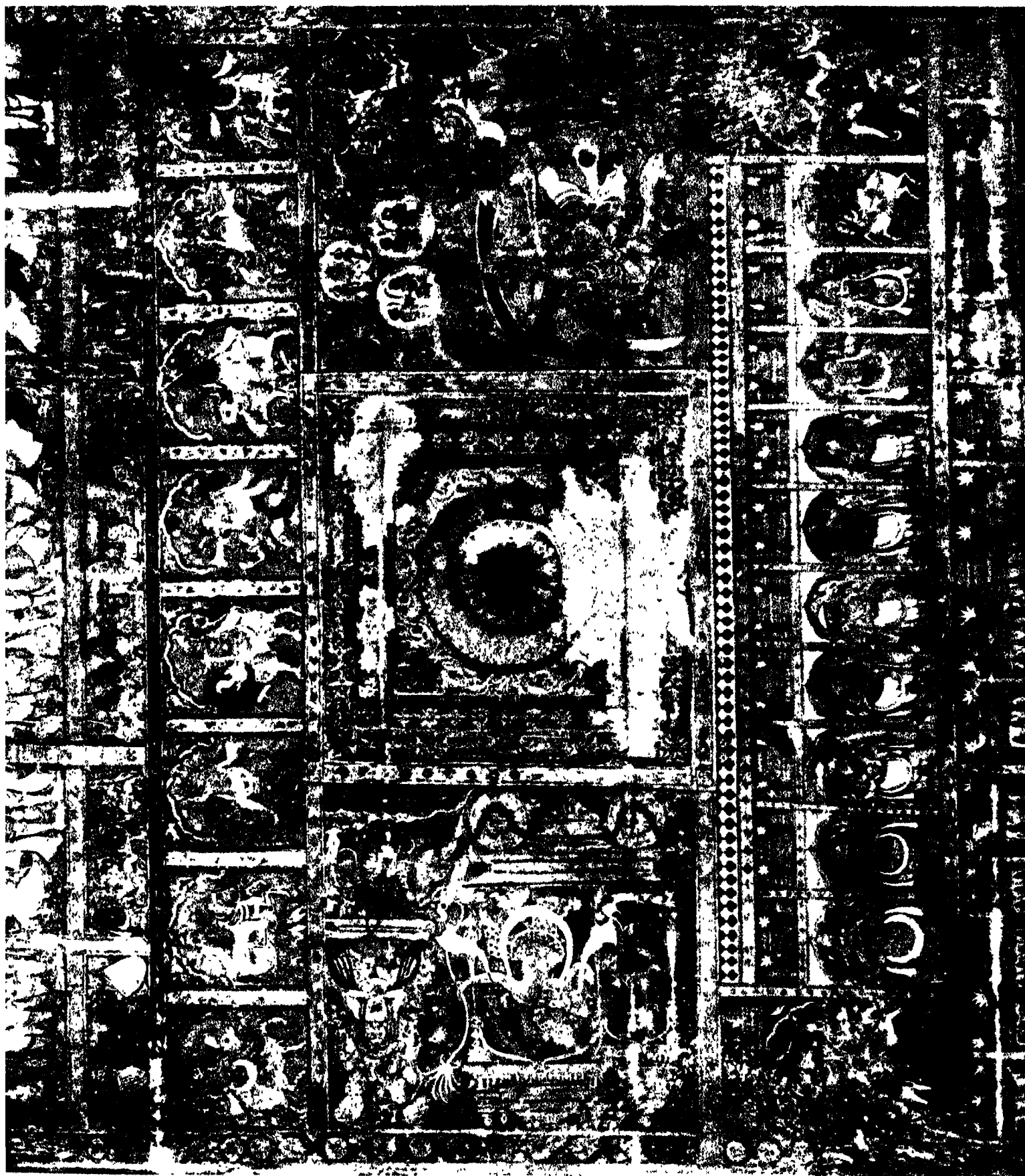
Fig. 61. Painting on ceiling of Virūpāksha Temple, Vijayanagara, 15th century, Hampi
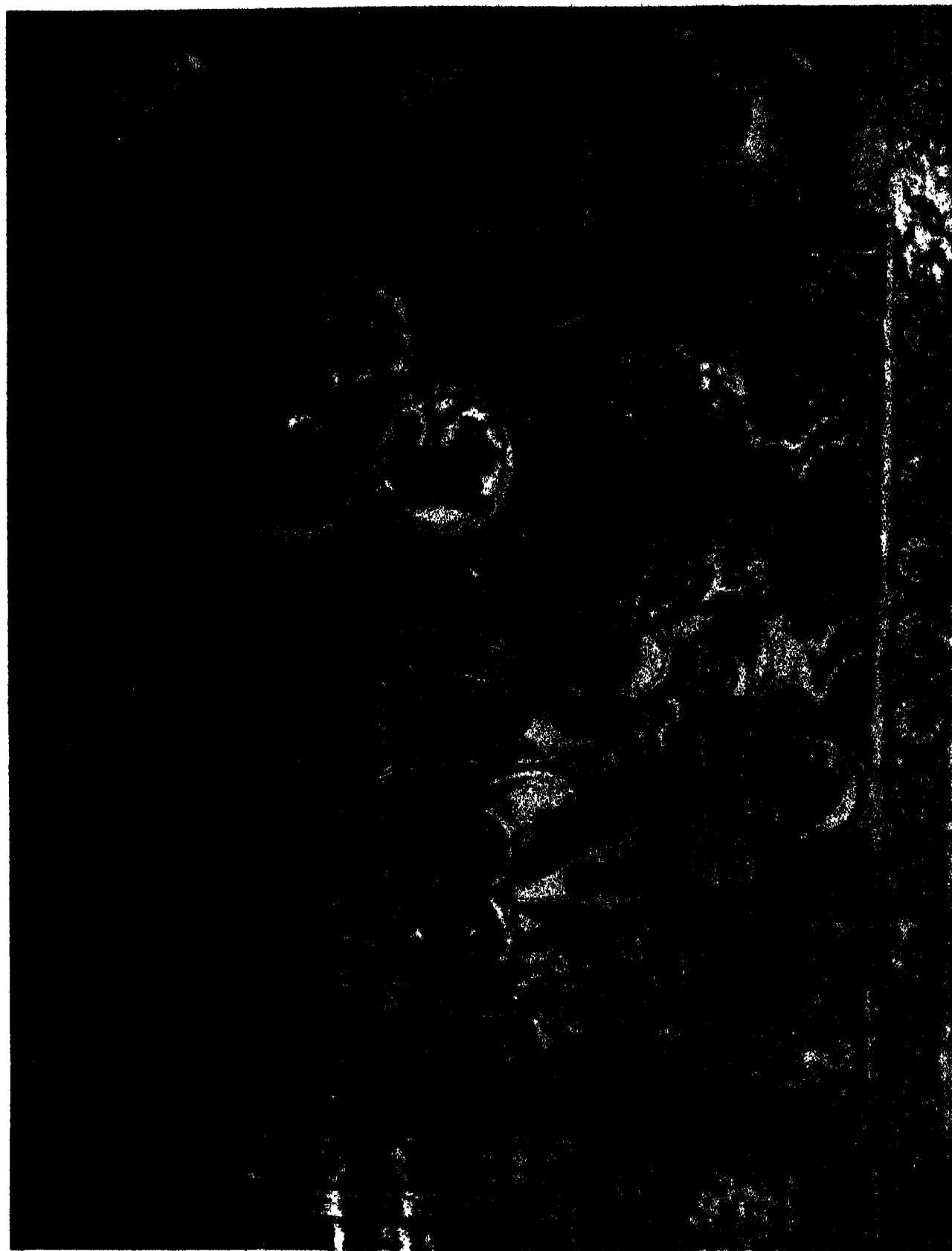
Fig. 62. Detail of 61, Tripurāntaka, Vijayanagara, 15th century, Hampi
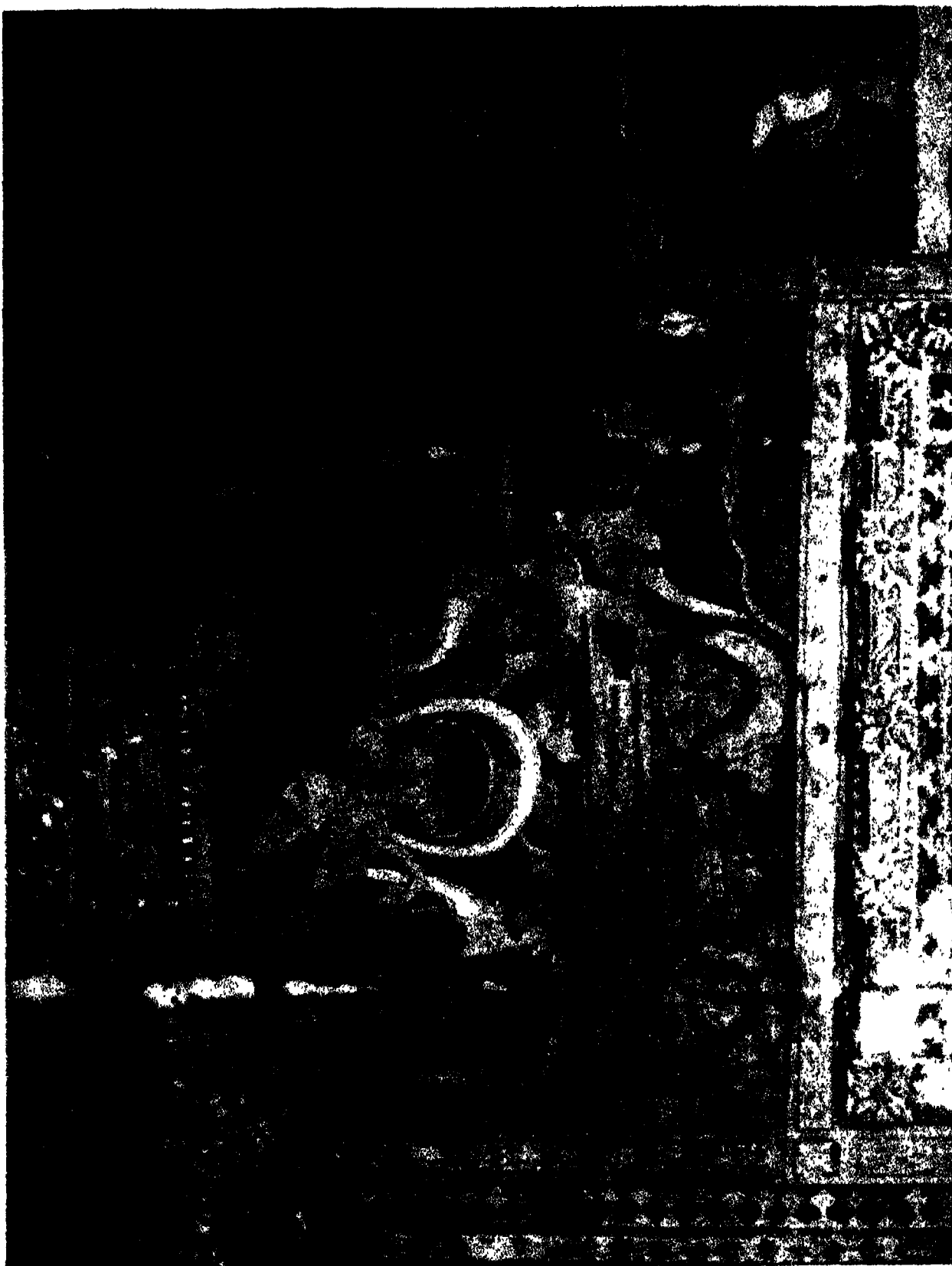
Fig. 63. Detail of 61, Madanāntaka, Vijayanagara, 15th century, Hampi
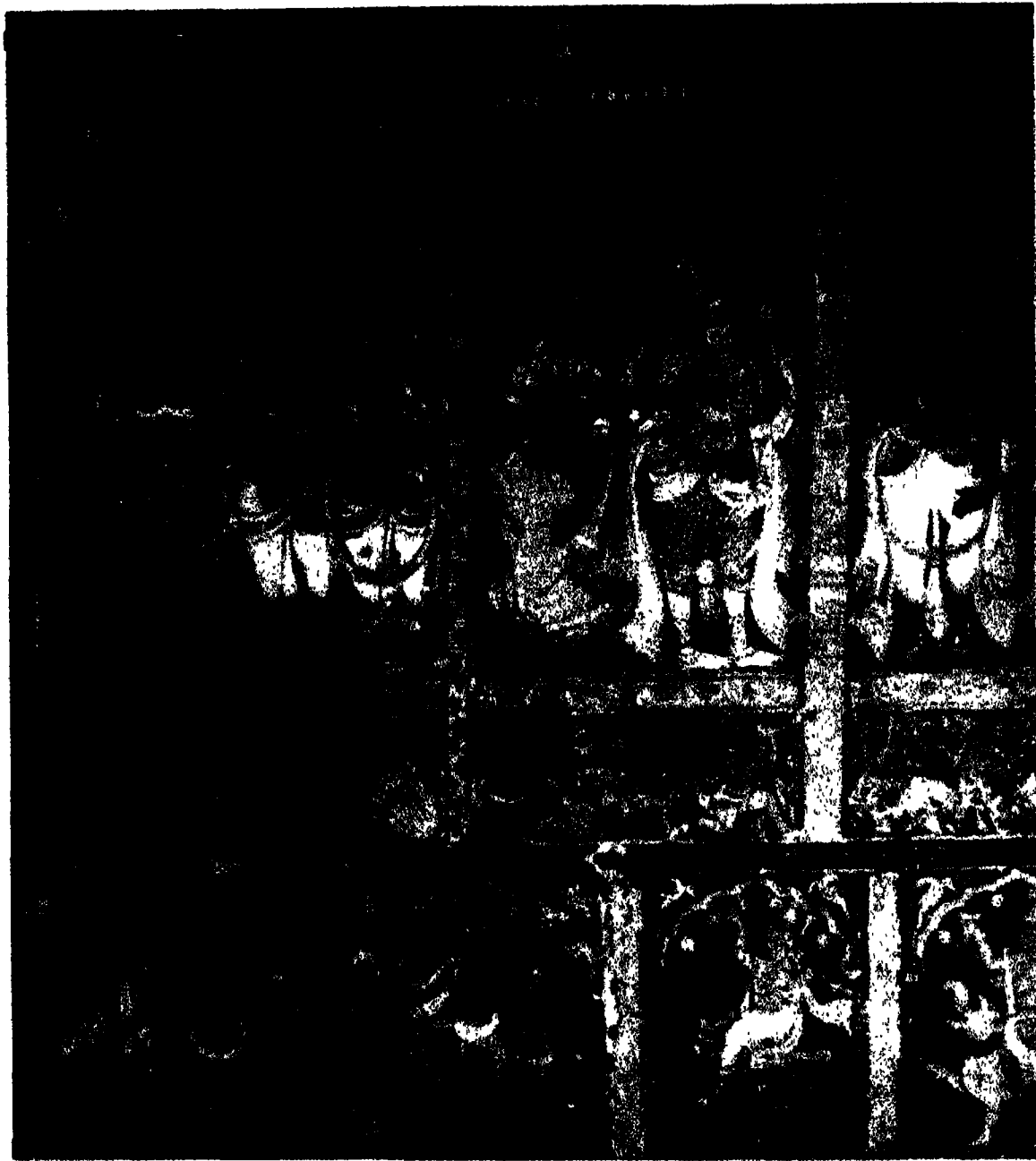
Fig. 64. Detail of 61, Celestials, Vijayanagara, 15th century, Hampi

shooting the moving piscine target, though drawn with skill and agreeable to the eye, are not comparable to those in the *ardhamaṇḍapa* which are far superior in skill of execution and aesthetic feeling.

This series also includes the story of Arjuna's penance, for which popular legend has provided the painter with excellent themes of a row of pictures, beginning with Śiva as *sukhāsīna*; hunters and sages, Indra presenting a weapon to Arjuna; Śiva appearing as a hunter, accompanied by his spouse; the boar; the fight over it and the blessing Arjuna receives from Maheśa in the gift of a divine weapon. There is a graphic presentation of Pārvatī's marriage, where many sages and gods like Vishṇu, Vāyu and Agni, appear as the principal guests. The toilet of Pārvatī before her marriage and the scene of Śiva playing chess with his wife, are indeed very interesting. The famous

masterpiece from Ellora of the Vākāṭaka age, showing Pārvatī's triumph over Śiva in the game of chess, recalling the verse of Bāṇa—*samuddīpitakandarpā kṛitagaurīprasādhanā, haralīleva no kasya vismayāya bṛihatkathā*—comes to our mind in this context. It shows how a popular theme has an endless life and continues during the centuries to reveal the triumph of painter and sculptor of each school in representing it in accordance with the style of the period. Here we have also the narration of the story of the calf run over by the car of the Choḷa prince and the cow claiming and getting justice meted out to her by the ruler, whose name itself proclaims his ideal of justice—*Manunītikoṇḍa* (Figs. 67 and 71). The story has a special importance at Tiruvālūr, in the Tañjāvūr district, where a monolithic car and the calf below it represent the scene. This, and the story of Arjuna's penance, as very popular themes, are repeated in sculptured panels of the Śiva Temple at Penukoṇḍa.

Fig. 65. Gaṅgādhara, Vijayanagara, 16th century, Lepākshī

There is also here representation in painting of Virūpaṇṇa and Vīraṇṇa, with their retinue (Fig. 66), receiving sacred ashes from the priests of their tutelary deity, Vīrabhadra. Their dress, and especially the headgear, recalling that of Kṛishṇadevarāya, in the bronze statue at Tirupati, and the stone sculpture at Chidambaram, and that of Tirumalarāya in Tirupati, is most interesting. It is only the brothers, as eminent chieftains, that are shown with this headgear, while the rest of the retinue wear other varieties of turban.

Fig. 66. Vīraṇṇa and Virūpaṇṇa with followers, Vijayanagara, 16th century, Lepākshī

Fig. 67. Śiva blessing Manunītikoṇḍa, Choḷa, Vijayanagara, 16th century, Lepākshī

Fig. 68. Dakshiṇāmūrti, Vijayanagara, 16th century, Lepākshī

The most important series of paintings here is from the ceiling of the *ardhamaṇḍapa*, rich in the presentation of various forms of Śiva, rising from the *liṅga* and assuring protection to devotees offering him worship, particularly the youth near by, who, but for the absence of Yama, with a noose to torment him, should be taken to be Mārkaṇḍeya. It may be the moment after Yama was repelled that is chosen by the artist for depiction.

Fig. 69. Śiva's head, Vijayanagara, 16th century, Lepākshī

The next painting shows Śiva killing the demon of ignorance, whose dismal colour is in striking contrast to the lustrous white of the divine destroyer. Agitation in the one and calm in the other are obvious moods. The sages and devotees on either side adore Andhakāsurasamhāramūrti (Fig. 58).

The divine teacher, seated on a hillock under the sacred tree to expound the mystic depths of philosophic thought to sages, whose lives have been an example of untiring devotion to the study of the most profound problems of life, is shown with a serene face. The *yogapaṭṭa* around his right leg, which rests on his left, the leisurely way in which the lower right arm comes over the knee, mark him as Yogadakshiṇāmūrti. Around him are a host of devotees adoring him. This panel of Dakshiṇāmūrti is superior to the similar one on the ceiling of the *Nāṭyamaṇḍapa*.

The divine grace of the boon-conferring Lord is clear in a painting where he is shown giving away one of his weapons to his devotee. Chaṇḍeśa receives with humility the axe that the deity kindly presents to him as the insignia of his office as the steward of his household, to which he is appointed. A Gaṇa, between the two figures, blowing a long bugle, announces the great gift to the devotees that throng to see this event. The staff that the Brahmin boy, Vichāraśarmā, used in his duties as a cowherd boy, turned miraculously into an axe, when, unknowingly, he dealt a blow and cut off the leg of his father, who disturbed his bathing of the Śivaliṅga with the milk of the cows he tended. In the *Śivabhaktavilāsa* it is given as by Śiva—*dattādhipatyam maddvāri śāśvatam testu*—'you are given for ever command at the gate of my household'.

The insignia of the door guardian's office is the axe that Chaṇḍeśa is shown carrying in every figure of his in stone or metal. The usual representations of Chaṇḍeśānugraha, of which the most famous is the sculpture from Gaṅgaikoṇḍacholapuram, show him as adorning his devotee's head with a garland of flowers as a mark of his grace. The *Uttarakāraṇāgama*, *Pūrvakāraṇāgama* and *Śilparatna* agree in giving this description. A sculpture in the Kailāsanātha Temple at Kāñchīpuram depicts Chaṇḍeśa cutting off the legs of his father who insulted the object of his worship. But in this painting the painter has used his imagination and taken the liberty of depicting Śiva in an entirely new *anugraha* (grace-con-

Fig. 70. Muchukunda's head, Vijayanagara, 16th century, Lepākshī

ferring) attitude; instead of his offering a flower garland, he offers the insignia of his office, the axe. This painting is not, as in sculpture, a seated figure of Śiva and Pārvatī, the former winding the garland on his devotee's head, but the whole group is standing and more alert.

The next scene presents Bhikshāṭana, the lovely beggar, on his march for alms, attended by a Gaṇa who carries his bowl on his head. He begged for alms and created passion in the breasts of even the wives of Ṛishis, most austere women, who are shown offerring him food in a state of mind where intense passion, created by his singularly perfect beauty of form, gets the better of the usual calm ascetic attitude. The poise of Bhikshāṭana is as noble and majestic as that of the dwarf is quaint and comical. The painter has fully succeeded in his expressive touches that enhance the obviously beautiful form of the ladies by infusing life, palpitating with passion, in their breasts. The calm serenity in Bhikshāṭana's general bearing reveals the ability of the painter, who could indicate such contrast. Even the deer jumps in admiration of its master's fascinating beauty. As one of the women empties a ladle of rice in the begging bowl, her mind is far from tranquil and there are visible signs of her passion for the supremely beautiful beggar; the other woman is eagerly waiting to repeat what her companion has done.

Three panels after this present in order Harihara, Śiva and Pārvatī approaching what appears and probably may be Mohinī, and a group of celestials adoring Chandraśekhara and Pārvatī. The Lord as a Creator and Destroyer, both aspects in one form, is the theme of the painting of Harihara. The dark half of Vishṇu's form makes a central line against the fair half of Śiva's body. Both of them show the marked features and characteristics of the respective deities.

The scene next to this is Śiva as Kalyāṇasundara, with Pārvatī as his bride. There is a gathering of sages and women. Brahmā officiates as priest. This may be compared with a similar one from the ceiling of the *Nāṭyamaṇḍapa*.

The saviour of the three worlds, in the warrior's *ālīḍha* attitude, is shown in the next painting. He rides the strangest chariot, to destroy the Tripuras, the earth with wheels composed of the sun and moon. The horses are the four *Vedas* and the charioteer here is Brahmā. The weapons chosen by Śiva to destroy these formidable demons are not less significant, as he bends his bow, mount Sumeru, twangs the bowstring in the hiss of Vāsuki, and shoots the arrow, which shape Vishṇu himself assumed, for the destruction of the Tripuras. The picture shows the defeat of the Tripuras to the great admiration of the devotees around.

Fig. 71. Śiva blessing bhaktas, Vijayanagara, 16th century, Lepākshi

Fig. 72. Women, Vijayanagara, 16th century, Lepākshi, Courtesy of SKIRA

Among the finest, if not the best, of the paintings here, is the panel showing Śiva as Gaṅgādhara (Fig. 65), in his attitude of appeasing Gaurī, as Gaurīprasādaka. It is a delicate theme rendered delicately. The whole composition of the picture does credit to the genius of the painter. Here is a happy blend of action and repose, anger and calm; also of the straight line and the curved line that make up the rhythmic outline of the composition in the simple *samabhaṅga* of Pārvatī and the complex *tribhaṅga* of Śiva, that already appears within the boundary of *atibhaṅga*. Gaṅgā in the locks of Śiva angers Gaurī terribly and her anger has to be appeased by her spouse. An effort at that difficult task is cleverly presented. The jealous anger of the *Khaṇḍitā nāyikā* (forsaken sweetheart) and the eager submission and the appealing attitude of the *śaṭha nāyaka* (faithless lover) are well portrayed here. The later treatment of this iconographic form, of which this is a good example, is in accordance with texts like the *Aṁśumadbhedāgama* and *Śilparatna*, but the charm of a small domestic squabble is absent from earlier representations by artists from the court of the Pallavas. The general description of Pārvatī, and a special feature about her face—*virahitānanā*, with the look of one 'forsaken', is clearly brought out here.

The next panel shows Naṭeśa in the *bhujaṅgatrāsita* (scared by a snake) attitude. The adjacent panel presents him as Vṛishabhārūḍha, riding the bull with Pārvatī beside him. Nandī has one of its legs resting on the head of a dwarf.

Chandraśekhara, Śiva standing moon-crested, is the next panel (Fig. 69); and the last of this series is seated Pārvatī with a lily in her right hand, wearing *kuchabandha* (breast band), *kirīṭa mukuṭa* (jewelled crown) and other adornments.

In the interior of the temple, on the dark and grimy walls of the shrine of Vīrabhadra, are the dim paintings of Śiva in different attitudes. One of the figures adoring Śiva is very interesting, as the face recalls that of Muchukunda, the monkey-faced king, who is painted over and over again in the temple at

Fig. 73. Rāma slaying Tāḍakā, Vijayanagara, 16th century, Somapālayam

Fig. 74. Rāma bidding goodbye to Daśaratha and Kaikeyī, Vijayanagara, 16th century, Somapālayam

Tiruvālūr. Muchukunda was among the greatest devotees of Śiva and is credited with bringing from heaven the five images of Tyāgarāja (Somāskanda), the principal one among which is enshrined in Tiruvālūr. That the story of the cow and its dead calf, which is of great local interest at Tiruvālūr, is specially depicted here and at Penukoṇḍa, suggests the possibility of this figure being Muchukunda. The stylized contour of the monkey's face, which is characteristic of the drawings of the animal in the Vijayanagara period, is noteworthy (Fig. 70).

The skill of the painter in design can be judged by the numerous drawings of scrolls and patterns, and particularly from the scroll of geese (Fig. 60), a whole length of which is represented with unerring draughtsmanship in the *ardhamaṇḍapa*.

Somewhat later in date is the Vishṇu Temple at Somapālayam, which, though in a sad state of preservation, has yet in the *maṇḍapa*, adjoining the entrance to the shrine, paintings illustrating scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. They are elegantly done and can be compared very favourably with those from the *ardhamaṇḍapa* at Lepākshī. The scene where Rāma attacks and kills Tāḍakā (Fig. 73) is as full of action as the one presenting Daśaratha trying to appease his wife, Kaikeyī, whose mind is agitated on account

of the evil gossip of Mantharā (Fig. 74). Rows of princely figures, buglers and drummers and musicians are here painted with great mastery.

The paintings in the Uchhayappa *maṭha* at Ānegundi fall in the third quarter of the 16th century. The paintings here are interesting, both for the vigour with which they are drawn, and for the themes that reflect the spirit of the age. The sympathetic study of animals, like the squirrel, recall the age-long affinity of the art-minded with nature around them.

The running women as palanquin-bearers suggest an age when they were freely used for such a purpose in the royal harem. The women, with a prince on their shoulders, in the carvings of pillars in Nāyaka *maṇḍapas* in the South, are all typical of this age.

Interesting themes, similarly characteristic of the age, are the elephant and horse, composed entirely of female bodies, and serving as the mount of Kāma and Rati, the god and goddess of Love. *Navanārīkuñjara* here made a *pañchanārīkuñjara*, as it is composed of five women, and the horse is also a similarly grouped pattern. The popularity of the theme is seen in similar representations from one end of the empire to the other. At Moodbidri there are wooden carvings and pillars illustrating the same theme. In Kāñchīpuram the theme is repeated and Vijayanagara art abounds in this representation.

The Temple of Varadarāja in Kāñchīpuram was once completely painted, but now there are only fragments left.

In a small *maṇḍapa*, known as Āṇḍāl *uñjal maṇḍapa*, the ceiling is covered with painting on the sculptured surface. Here the sports of Kṛishṇa, like *gopikāvastraharaṇa* and *Kālīyamardana* are shown, as also Vishṇu seated with consorts, dancing figures, the Vijayanagara crest comprising boar and dagger, Vidyādhara riders on palanquins, composed of feminine figures, a theme popular in Vijayanagara art, along with similarly made up elephant and horse, as vehicles of Rati and Manmatha. In the triangular strips at the corners, there are Garuḍas and Devas.

In the *maṇḍapa* opposite Narasiṃha's shrine, below that of Varadarāja, a band around a central square is painted on the ceiling. The theme of Rati and Manmatha, as principal figures of a group, is repeated on the four sides; Rati rides a parrot at the corners. The god of love is either bending his sugar-cane bow, to shoot flowery arrows, or passionately caressing his consort or violently dancing with her, in every case, with a bevy of damsels, companions of Rati, all around. Though the colours have mostly disappeared, there yet is sufficient left of the outline to show vigorous drawing, sinuous line and animated movement. Red, yellow, green and black are easily made out, but most of the other colours are faded. These paintings can be dated towards the end of the 16th century.

In the main shrine of Varadarāja itself on the wall of the corridor, facing the back of the main shrine and, very close to a window, is a painting which is better preserved than the rest, that covers almost the entire wall area, though completely darkened by soot and ruined beyond recognition. Here is a presentation of Garuḍavāhana of Varadarāja, with a large temple umbrella held on either side, *chaurī* and other symbols. It is a representation of the famous *Garuḍavāhana* festival for which this temple is very famous. There are two devotees shown—one a king on an elephant sounding cymbals, and singing the glory of the Lord, and an humbler devotee standing on the ground, in deep reverence. Close by is a

panel presenting Vishṇu from Tiruvaḍandai, attended by his three consorts—Lakshmī, here named Tirumagal, Bhūdevī, styled Maṇmagal and Nīlādevī. The colour here is better preserved than on the rest of the wall and the outlines are clearer. The paintings may be dated in the 17th century and the workmanship is rather poor.

The Vijayanagara empire was so far-flung that, in the different parts composing it, a variety of modulation or variation in details of style, in the treatment of identical subjects, with, however, a strong under-current of basic affinity, can be perceived. Thus as much as there is a distinct Vijayanagara influence in the Deccani *Kalm* of miniatures there is a reflection of Vijayanagara pictorial form and technique even in Orissa, where the mighty arm of Kṛishṇadevarāya penetrated, by his triumph over the Gajapati.

Nāyaka

17th-18th centuries A.D.

THE battle of Talikoṭa weakened the Vijayanagara empire and made it possible for the vassal kings, generals and chieftains, to assume importance and throw off even the nominal allegiance to a weak sovereign at the capital. Though for some time the Nāyaka kings were loyal to the Vijayanagara emperor,

Fig. 75. Bālalīlās, Nāyaka, 17th century, Tirupparuttikuṅram

Fig. 76. Vishṇu gathering lotuses, Nāyaka, 17th century, Tañjāvūr

slowly the very helplessness of the sovereign made it impossible for the chieftains to exist, except by declaring their strength and independence. Among such kings in the South, the Nāyakas of Tañjāvūr and of Madurai are very important. Tirumala Nāyaka of Madurai and Raghunātha Nāyaka of Tañjāvūr are among the most famous and they fostered in their courts art and literature, as did Vijayanagara sovereigns earlier. The Nāyaka phase of art in Madurai is as important as the Vijayanagara phase and some of the massive sculptures, with tremendous vitality and force, are probably the last flicker of a great art that was on the verge of collapse.

At Tirupparuttikuṅram in the *Saṅgīta-maṇḍapa*, the outer one nearest the main shrine, the earlier series of fragments, depicting the birth

Fig. 77. Muchukunda's story, Nāyaka, late 17th century, Tiruvālūr

Fig. 78. Bhikshāṭana and Mohinī, Nāyaka, late 17th century, Chidambaram

and anointing of Vardhamāna, presents an earlier phase of Vijayanagara painting, of the 14th century.

The other paintings here belong to a later date; some are of the 16th century, and others, the latest ones, are of the 17th century—the time of the Nāyakas. Scenes from the life of Ṛishabhadeva, the first Tīrthaṅkara, of Vardhamāna, of Kṛishṇa, the cousin of the Tīrthaṅkara, Neminātha, as well as the life

Fig. 79. Bhikshāṭana and Mohinī, Nāyaka, late 17th century, Chidambaram
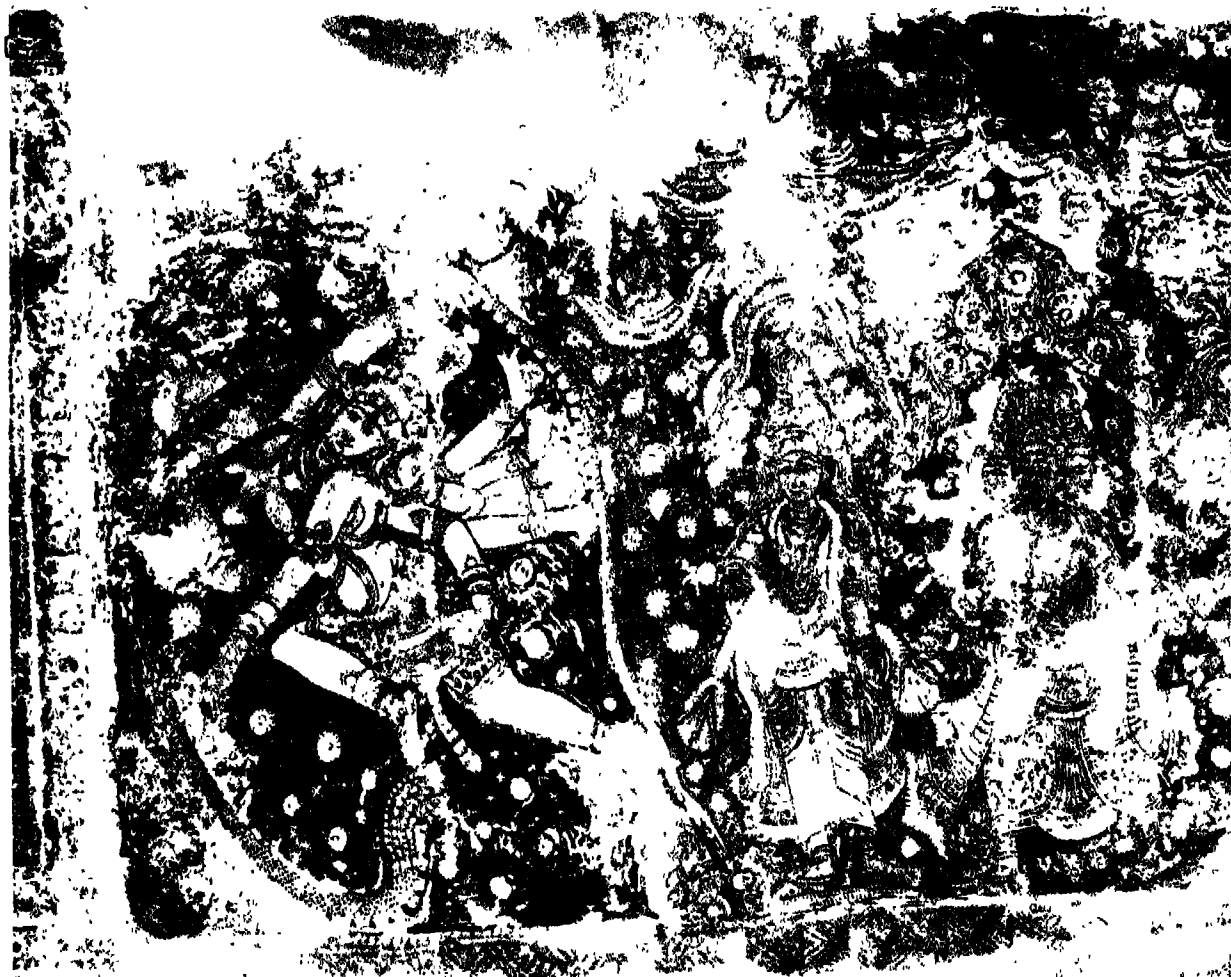
Fig. 80. Naṭarāja's dance witnessed by celestials, Nāyaka, 17th century, Tiruvalañjuḷi

of Nemināthа himself, are all graphically portrayed in a long series with elaborate labels, painted in Tamil, explaining each incident clearly. In the later paintings this becomes a usual feature, as we may observe in other paintings at Chidambaram, Tiruvālūr, etc. Even in temple hangings this method of painting the labels became a regular practice. It may also be observed in the miniature paintings from the South and the Deccan, as in the *Yamapaṭa* and coronation of Yudhishṭhira from Cuddapah, with the legend in Telugu. Vasudeva receiving the new born baby from Devakī, crossing the Yamunā and giving the child to Nandagopa, the *bālalīlās* of Kṛishṇa (Fig. 75), his killing the various *Asuras*, Śakaṭa, Dhenuka, etc., the uprooting of the *Yamala* trees as he crawled along, pulling the mortar to which he was chained, and so forth, a whole group of cows, cowherds and milkmaids, are all graphically portrayed in this series. These and several other incidents from the life of Ṛishabhadeva, Vardhamāna and Neminātha, portrayed along with their descriptive labels, have been discussed at length by Ramachandran in his book on the Tirupparuttikuṅram Temples. It is interesting to note that such important formalities as the presentation of the *pūrṇakumbha*, flowers and other objects as a welcome, are specially stressed. Dancers and musicians are presented in innumerable charming panels.

Fig. 81. Celestial musicians witnessing Śiva's dance, Nāyaka, 17th century, Tiruvalañjuḷi

In the temple at Tañjāvūr, a long panel facing west, in the circumambulatory passage, shows Indra on an elephant, Agni on a ram and Yama on a buffalo, Nirṛitti on a human mount, Varuṇa on a *makara* and Marut on a deer. The *amṛitamanthana* scene here appropriately presents the objects that rose out of the ocean when it was churned, like the *Kalpavṛiksha* (wish-fulfilling tree), Uchchaiśravas (celestial horse), Airāvata (heavenly elephant), Kāmadhenu (the cow of plenty), Rambhā, Urvaśī (celestial nymphs) and others. Lakshmī is towards one end, on a lotus, with her hands in assurance of protection and prosperity and is approached by Devas. On the adjacent south wall is a long *amṛita-manthana* scene with the Devas on one side and the Asuras on the other, holding the hoods and tail of Vāsuki respectively, the great tortoise supporting mount Mandara, fish and flowers suggesting water and the ocean. Above the panel, Vishṇu, flanked by Śrī and Bhūdevī, is approached by Brahmā, Indra and the other gods. The glory of Indra is stressed by repeating him on an elephant at one end.

On the wall beyond, facing north, is a long panel depicting a sage, Durvāsas, first in penance, then bathing the Śivaliṅga with water from a tank, gathering a garland for the *liṅga* and offering it to Indra, approaching on Airāvata.

Fig. 82. Bhikshāṭana, Nāyaka, 17th century, Tiruvalañjuḷi

Beyond this is a battle scene of charioteers. On the opposite wall is a panel representing Durgā fighting the demons, Śumbha, Niśumbha and others. She is in the *ālīḍha* pose of a warrior fighting vigorously. Further up on the wall facing north is repetition of this theme and relates how Vishṇu gathered lotuses from a tank to worship Śiva (Fig. 76), how he offered one thousand flowers a day, and when he failed to get one on an occasion, made up for it by offering his own eye, and thereby won the blessing of Śiva as Vishṇvanugrahamūrti. The stylized form of the tank, with trees in the vicinity, is characteristic of this mode of representation. A Ṛishi in penance beyond, graced by the appearance of Vishṇu on Garuḍa, shows how the Lord, who manifested himself as a boon giver to the highest saints, himself gathered flowers to adore Śiva as the supreme being. The best preserved portion here is Vishṇu gathering flowers.

The various temples at Kumbakoṇam and other places in Tañjāvūr district, presenting the Nāyaka phase of art, are equally noteworthy.

The paintings of this period continue the traditions of the Vijayanagara craftsmen and form a close link with the immediate past, and in fact should be studied along with those of Vijayanagara.

Fig. 83. Manmatha and Rati, Nāyaka, 17th century, Tiruvalañjuḷi

The temple at Tiruvālūr is among the most famous Śaivite shrines in South India; and Sundara, the great devotee saint, proclaims himself in one of his hymns as the most humble adorer of all those born in Tiruvālūr. The image of Tyāgarāja (Somāskanda) here is a masterpiece of metal sculpture. The legend has it that an early mythical Choḷa King, Muchukunda, who was monkey-faced, brought it from heaven. The inadvertent dropping of *Bilva* leaves on a Śivaliṅga by a monkey perched on the tree on the night of Śivarātri had its efficacy, and an animal, innocent of the fruit of its action, was, through the blessing of the Lord, born an emperor, but retained his monkey-face and the memory of his former existence as an animal.

This popular legend finds a place in a series of paintings of the late 17th and early 18th century on the ceiling, between the second colonnade of pillars in the thousand pillared *maṇḍapa*, the narration enlivened by detailed descriptive labels explaining each incident as is the painter's wont in this late phase of Nāyaka art. Muchukunda, the great devotee of Śiva, is first portrayed as a great friend of Indra, the Lord of Heaven, and as his great ally in overcoming the Asuras. Majestically he rides an elephant in a great procession. He is received with great honour by Indra (Fig. 77) at the entrance to his city and

Fig. 84. Vṛishabhārūḍha, Nāyaka, 17th century, Tiruvalañjuḷi

the beautiful celestial damsels honour him by scattering parched rice from their balconies which is most beautifully represented in the paintings, recalling the famous line of the poet—*āchāralājairiva paura-kanyāḥ*. Waving of lamps and offering of garlands complete this adoration of a mortal king by the celestials. Muchukunda is interested in the adoration of Tyāgarāja by Indra. Instructed by Śiva in his dream, Muchukunda requests Indra to give him the image of Tyāgarāja. Indra presents seven Tyāgarājas, all of them alike, making it difficult for him to choose the real one. But Muchukunda triumphs and, as advised by Nārada, brings them all to the earth in a celestial chariot, for being established in different spots. There are interesting scenes of dance in the *sabhā* of Indra by celestial nymphs, including Rambhā and Urvaśī. Muchukunda, praying and obtaining the help of Vishṇu, shown as Lakshmīnārāyaṇa, on the serpent-couch in the milky ocean, represented almost as a tank, is interesting. Festivities connected with the temple of Tyāgarāja are also graphically depicted in this series of paintings.

In the temple at Chidambaram, on the ceiling of the large *maṇḍapa* in front of the shrine of
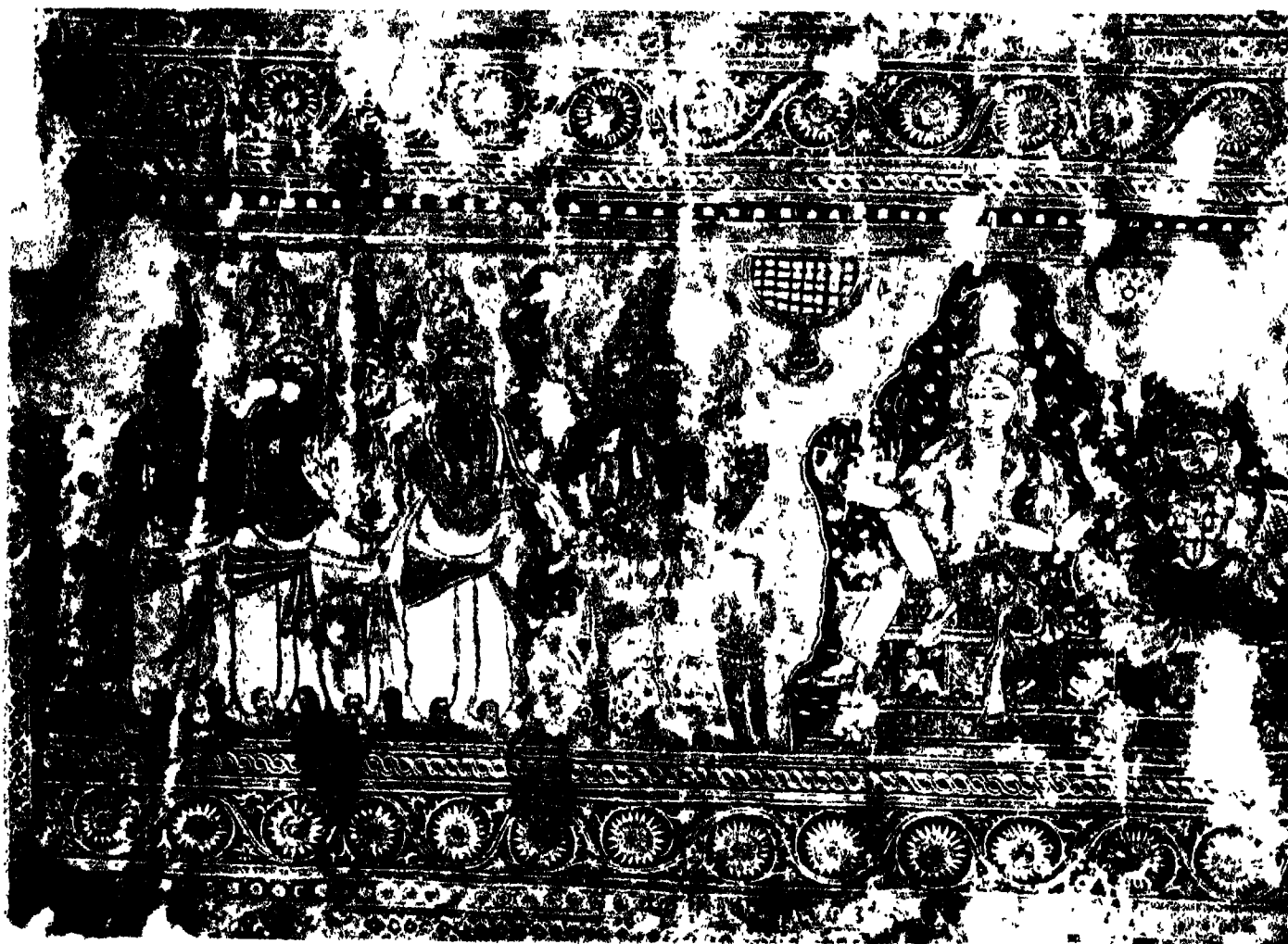
Fig. 85. Umāsahita Śiva blessing Skanda as Gurumūrti, Nāyaka, 17th century, Tiruvalañjuḻi

Śivakāmasundarī, there is represented the story of the genesis of the Bhikshāṭana form of Śiva and of Mohinī of Vishṇu (Figs. 78 and 79). The plan of Śiva and Vishṇu to proceed to Dārukāvana, to test the Ṛishis and Ṛishi-patnīs by assuming the strange guise of the naked beggar and the bewitching enchantress, succeeds. Bhikshāṭana captures the hearts of the Ṛishi-patnīs and Mohinī ravishes the hearts of the sages, as narrated at length in long panels, row after row, in bright and beautiful colours. Beyond this story is that of the discomfited Ṛishis performing an *ābhichārika homa* to destroy Śiva, and how, out of the fire, arose the deer, the snake, the tiger, Muyalaka and so-forth. Towards another end of the *maṇḍapa*, there is Gaṇeśa and Umāsahita with Ṛishis, Skanda with Vallī and Devasenā, Nandī conversing with Śiva and Pārvatī in Kailāsa, Naṭarāja as Sabhāpati with Śivakāmasundarī, surrounded by Gaṇas dancing and playing musical instruments. There are several other stories also from *Śivapurāṇa*, illustrating the lives of saints.

In the *maṇḍapa*, in front of the *gopura* leading to the shrine of the goddess, there is an impressive painting of Naṭarāja with Śivakāmasundarī in the *Sabhā*, surrounded by the planets, celestial beings, the
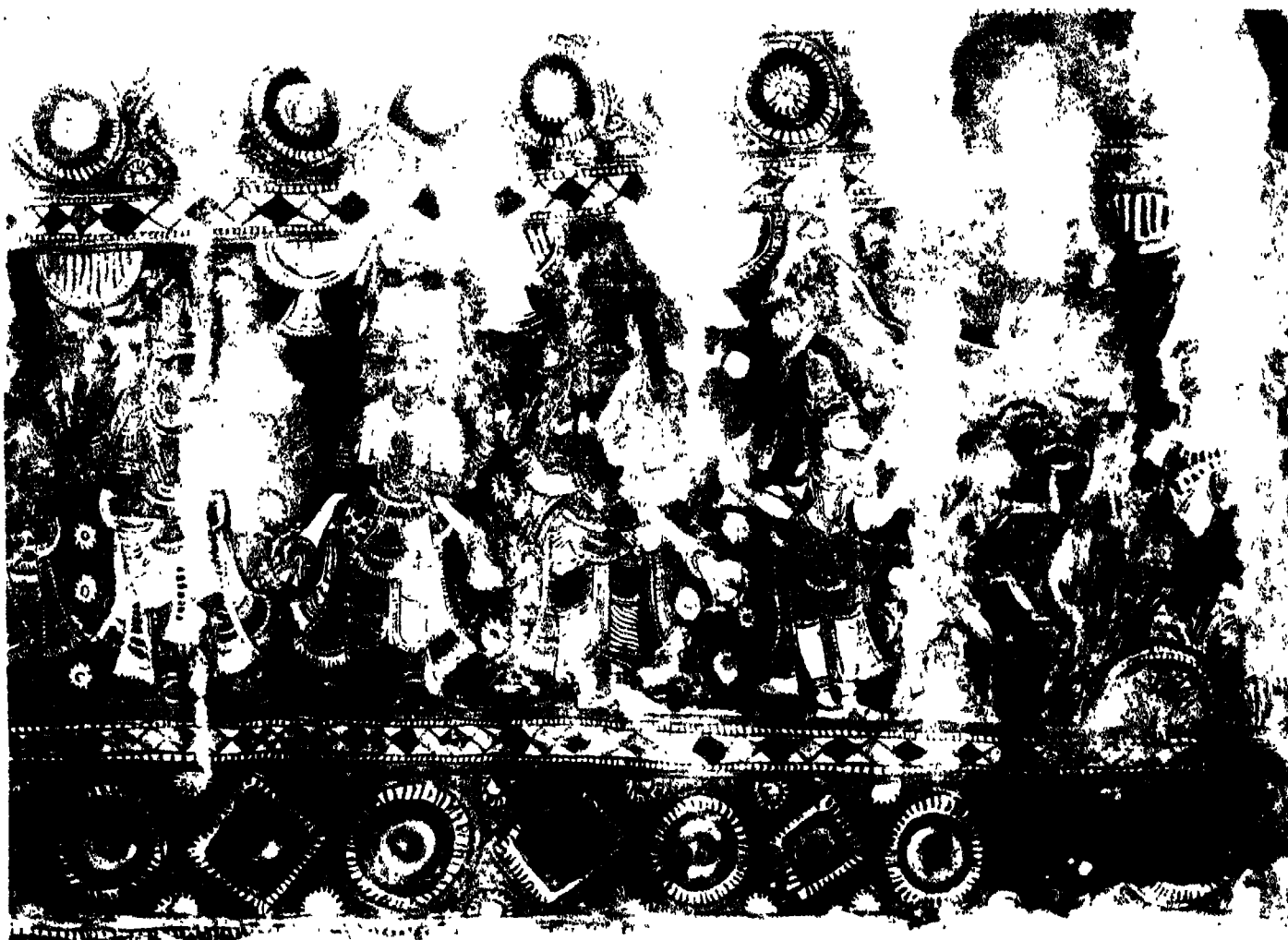
Fig. 86. Bhṛiṅgi, Nandi, Vishṇu and Brahmā, Nāyaka, 17th century, Tiruvalañjuḷi

Dīkshitars (temple priests) of Chidambaram and so-forth. All these represent the Nāyaka phase of decoration in this ancient temple.

In the Kapardīśvara temple at Tiruvalañjuḷi, to which my attention was drawn graciously some years ago by His Holiness Jagadguru Śri Śaṅkarācharya of Kāñchī, there are paintings of the 17th century. The *līlās* or the sports of Śiva are graphically presented on the ceiling. The description in *Pradoshastava* (evening hymn) is clearly followed in representing the orchestral accompaniment to the dance of Śiva (Fig. 80). Śiva, multi-armed, dances with Vāsuki, encircling him as an aureole, his vigorous movements scattering flowers all around; even a fish sporting in mid-air, suggesting the spilling of the celestial river Gaṅgā escaped out of his *jaṭas*, his foot in fast motion, taken off the body of the dwarf Apasmāra, who sits up in glee. Devī, as Śivakāmasundarī, stands quietly holding a lotus in her hand and watching the dance of her Lord, Brahmā keeps time and Vishṇu plays the *mṛidaṅga* drum, while a Deva plays the *pañchamukhavādya*, (five-faced drum). Ṛishis and other celestials from above watch in adoration this feast for the eyes (Fig. 81).

Fig. 87. Miniature illustrating Rāmāyaṇa scenes, Nāyaka, 17th century, Sarasvati Mahal Library, Tañjāvūr

Another panel represents Bhikshāṭana, that is, Śiva as the lovely beggar, accompanied by his dwarf attendants and receiving alms from the Ṛishipatnīs (Fig. 82).

Yet another panel presents the popular theme of Rati and Manmatha (Fig. 83), the former on a swan and the latter, in the *ālīḍha* (warrior pose), with his sugar-cane bow and flowery arrows, on a chariot drawn by parrots. Youthful dancers accompany Rati, to suggest youth and charm.

Śiva and Pārvatī on a bull (Fig. 84), blessing Vishṇu standing adoring them, is the theme of a panel representing Vishṇvanugrahamūrti. This is painted with great vigour, both the Gaṇas following Śiva and the celestial musicians in the sky. Another painting shows Śiva and Pārvatī seated in audience and blessing Brahmā and Brahmaṛishis, with a little boy in front of them all, representing the significant story of baby Subrahmaṇya, who taught the meaning of *praṇava* to Brahmā, a thing which surprised Śiva and won for the little genius the title of Brahma-Śāstā and Gurumūrti (Fig. 85). The hand of Śiva in *chinmudrā*, or the attitude of explaining the highest truth, is very significant here. This is a masterpiece among these paintings.

Fig. 88. Yudhishthira's coronation, Nāyaka, 17th century, Cuddapah, Madras Museum

Another panel represents a long retinue approaching Śiva, composed of Bhṛiṅgi, the emaciated saint with three legs, Nandikeśvara, Vishṇu, Brahmā, Indra and others (Fig. 86). It is interesting to note that Indra is shown with innumerable eyes all over his body, a peculiar suggestion of the epithet Sahasrāksha. There are several other paintings here, including Rati and her companions in various attitudes and dance poses, and several other themes from the *Purāṇas*. The paintings in this temple are among the most important to illustrate the Nāyaka phase of art.

The Nāyakas of Vellore, the Wodeyars of Mysore and the viceroys from Penukonda, Śrīraṅgapaṭnam and Chandragiri also fostered art. The patron of the famous scholar-philosopher-polymath, Appayya Dīkshita, Chinnabomma Nāyaka and his son, Liṅgama Nāyaka, gave the world such famous monuments as the exquisitely carved Jalakaṇṭheśvara Temple at Vellore and the Mārgasahāyeśvara Temple at Viriñchipuram. The paintings from the temple at Tāḍpatri, the later murals from the Kāñchīpuram area, the miniature paintings from the Andhra and Tamil districts, like the Coronation of Yudhishṭhira (Fig. 88) and the *Yamapaṭa* scene from Cuddapah, and the long series of *Rāmāyaṇa* episodes, with explanatory labels, as is usual in such paintings, both in murals and miniatures (Fig. 87), are all typical examples of this phase. The 17th century was also thus very fruitful. The paintings produced during the time of the Nawabs in the South in the 18th century, like those of Cuddapah, Kurnool, Arcot and Mysore, are only an extension of the Vijayanagara-Nāyaka style, with the Deccani influence of the Bijapur, Golkoṇḍa, Hyderabad schools, that are themselves tinged by the Mughal style.

Medieval Kerala

16th-18th centuries A.D.

MEDIEVAL Kerala was divided into small political units. The rulers of Calicut, Cochin and Travancore were dominant figures, though there were other principalities like the Kurumbarnāḍ, Pālghāṭ, Crānganore, and Iḍapally.

Achyutarāya, the Vijayanagara emperor, defeated Udayamārtaṇḍavarma, the ruler of Travancore, as described in the *Achyutarāyābhyudaya*, a fact corroborated by a Kāñchīpuram inscription of the monarch. A successor, Vīrakeralavarma, was very friendly with the Portuguese, though not so with the emperor. This led to a second defeat at the hands of the imperial power and submission to it. This is confirmed from inscriptions at Suchīndram, dated 1547.

The great Tirumala Nāyaka of Madurai tried again, successfully, to overcome Travancore. Even in the time of Maṅgammā, the queen regent of Madurai in 1697, Travancore was overrun by the Nāyaka army of Madurai.

The Zamorin was a powerful ruler whose friendship was sought and obtained by the Portuguese when they arrived in India. Being a maritime city, Calicut was very prosperous. The Mohammadan merchants and the Arab traders contributed in no small measure to the prosperity of the state.

Cochin was also very important, but its power was gradually weakened by dissensions in the royal family and frequent territorial incursions by the Zamorin. The power of the Madurai Nāyakas, erst-while feudatories of the Vijayanagara emperors, dominated to an extent in Kerala. That explains how the Vijayanagara traditions, found all over the vast empire in the Andhra, Karṇāṭaka and Tamil areas, are also seen in Kerala. But in Kerala it is not so clearly perceptible as in other areas, since the local traditions, reinforced strongly by the Chāḷukya-Hoysaḷa traditions, that flowed into the region through the earlier contacts and feuds, had an efflorescence in a peculiar regional school of decorative art, strongly recalling *Kathakali*, *Oṭṭantuḷḷal* and other modes of dance drama, with picturesque costume and embellishment. The leather shadow play figures, *Olapāvakūttu*, have also the same decorative patterns and designs.

The Maṭṭāncheri Palace in Cochin was built by the Portuguese about 1557 and presented to Virakeralavarma, the ruler of the period. In spite of many vicissitudes, it is still venerated as the ancient coronation hall of the rulers of the land. The *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes, painted in the long room to the west of the coronation hall, called the *Paḷḷiyarai*, form a remarkable collection of typical paintings of the period. They were executed towards the end of the 16th or the beginning of the 17th century. This was the time of the influence of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭātiri, the author of the famous *Nārāyaṇīyam*, a Sanskrit poem, con-

Fig. 89. Umāmaheśvara, 18th century, Maṭṭāncheri Palace, Cochin

densing the *Bhāgavata* and giving the glory of Kṛishṇa of Guruvāyūr, which was very popular in Malabar. His *Mahābhāratachampū*, in *Prabandha* style, that inspired the Pāṭhaka story-tellers of Malabar, also contributed greatly to making the episodes in Kṛishṇa's life most popular. The location of the temples of Pazhayannūr Bhagavatī, Vishṇu and Śiva, in the premises of the palace, reveals the broad-based faith of the rulers and the ruled. The pictures here and elsewhere in Cochin strongly recall a spirit of dogged faith when the proselytising spirit of the Portuguese, and the Dutch after them, had to be combatted by

Fig. 90. Govardhanagiridhārī, 18th century, Maṭṭāncheri Palace, Cochin

Fig. 91. Kṛishṇa and Gopis, 18th century, Maṭṭāncheri Palace, Cochin

redoubled fervour for their faith, apparent in the wealth of iconographic detail and vivid presentation of scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, *Devīmāhātmya*, *Bhāgavata* and *Kumārasambhava*. The contemporary literature in the area also reflects this spirit of a great religious upsurge. Even scions of royal houses, like Mānaveda of the Zamorin's family, were poets. He composed the *Pūrvabhārata-champū* and *Kṛishṇanāṭaka;* his contemporary Nārāyaṇa Namboodiri wrote commentaries on the *Kumārasambhava* and *Raghuvamśa*. All of them account for sustained interest in the themes of these works that are reflected in art of the period.

In the beginning of the 18th century, the paintings in the staircase room, to the right of the coronation hall, in the south-east end of the palace, were executed. Here the themes are Mahālakshmī, Bhūtamātā, Kirātamūrti, the coronation of Rāma, Śeshaśāyi Vishṇu, Umāmaheśvara, Vishṇu in *bhogāsana*, as in the favourite temple of Guruvāyūr. In the 18th century, Hyder Ali was as great a menace to Cochin, as was Travancore and the Dutch, whose place was later taken by the British. But finally Sir Thomas Munro prevailed in establishing friendly relations with the state. Again a religious fervour, with predominant Vaishṇavism, brought forth murals towards the end of the 18th century that were continued in the beginning of the 19th also. In this 18th century series we have the beautiful pictorial

Fig. 92. Veṇugopāla, 18th century, Trichur

narration of the marriage of Pārvatī: the seven sages persuading Himavān to give his daughter in marriage to Śiva—very interesting to compare with similar portrayal in sculpture at Ellora; Umā amidst her companions decorating herself, as a bride, an impressive marriage procession and the presentation of the bride by Vishṇu are all quaint and picturesque representations of familiar figures from Malabar, giving glimpses of the life of the period, so simple and natural in a country as yet untainted by external influence.

Fig. 93. Archer, wood carving, 18th century, Kerala

Similarly Śiva in dalliance with Mohinī, caught unawares and appearing crestfallen before Pārvatī, who discovers him in that compromising situation, is most interesting. Kṛishṇa in the company of *gopīs* recalls the loving description of Jayadeva (Fig. 91). As Govardhanagiridhara, lifting the mountain, he has a crowd to protect, as in the sculptural representation at Mahābalipuram, which is significant in all its details, as pointed out by Rangacharya.

The Umāmaheśvara group (Fig. 89) at Maṭṭāncheri Palace closely follows the *dhyānaśloka, maṅgalāyatanam devam yuvānam atisundaram dhyāyet kalpatarormule sukhāsīnam sahomayā,* that describes him comfortably seated under the *Kalpavṛiksha,* surrounded by his *Bhūtagaṇas* and devotees, and the companions of Pārvatī, Gaṇeśa on his mouse and Kārttikeya with his peacock, are also present on either side. The comfortable doze of the resting bull, Nandi, is indeed, a delightful concept.

In the Govardhana scene (Fig. 90), the ease with which Kṛishṇa lifts the mountain, while playing the flute with his other hand, or joking with the concourse of cowherds and milkmaids, assembled under this strange canopy, recalls the verse in the context from the *Nārāyaṇīya* which was, no doubt, on the lips of every one in Malabar: *bhavati vidhṛitaśaile bālikābhirvayasyairapi vihitavilāsam kelilāpādilole savidhamilitadhenūrekahastena kaṇḍūyati sati paśupālāstoshamaishanta sarve* (*Nārāyaṇīya,* 63-5): 'as he raised the hill, he pleased them all, joking merrily with the girls and companions, and caressing the cows as they approached him'. The care of a mother for a little child, as it rushes towards her, the help offered by a milkmaid to an elderly woman using her staff to raise herself, the fondling of a baby by a newly married couple, the fond approach of the cows towards Kṛishṇa, completely confident of his might to protect them, shows the keen study of life by the painter, who has equally acquitted himself with credit in the magnificent drawings of the foreshortened back of the lion, the gazelles with outstretched necks, and the complacent boar, moving majestically along, in contrast to the jackal with tail between legs, cautiously proceeding from behind bushes.

The paintings from the temple at Trichūr, which come close to this in date and spirit of execution

Fig. 94. Rāma expounding philosophy, 18th century, Trichur

Fig. 95. Rāma-Rāvaṇa-Yuddha, 18th century, Trichur

and style, present a theme which is a great favourite in this region—Rāma as conceived in the *dhyānaśloka* (Fig. 94): *vāidehīsahitam suradrumatale haime mahāmaṇḍape madhye pushpakam āsane maṇimaye vīrāsane susthitam agre vāchayati prabhañjanasute tattvam munibhyaḥ param vyākhyāntam bharatādibhiḥ parivṛitam rāmam bhaje śyāmalam,* seated in *vīrāsana* with the thumb and pointing finger of the right hand brought together in the attitude of teaching the highest principle in philosophy to the assembled sages and his brothers, while Hanumān reads the text from the manuscript in his hand. This occurs at Maṭṭāncheri Palace also. Uttered by all that recite the *Rāmāyaṇa* in *pārāyaṇa* (chant) every day in South India, this verse is even today significant as representing a tradition. There are bronzes from the Tamil area showing this special attitude of Rāma as a teacher. It occurs again in Triprayār (Fig. 102) and in Tiruvañchikuḷam (Fig. 100), in the paintings in the temple, as also in wood-carvings like the one from the Ettumānūr Temple, dated in the middle of the 16th century. Similarly the Veṇugopāla theme plays a very important role in the selection of subject for the murals; we have it in the earlier series of paintings from Cochin State, as from the temples of Triprayār (Fig. 101), Tiruvañchikuḷam (Fig. 99 and the later series of the 18th century at Trichūr (Fig. 92). The temple at Trichūr has vigorous paintings depicting a battle of archers (Figs. 95 and 96), with which similar wood carving may be compared (Fig. 93), themes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and Kṛishṇa receiving Sudāma with utmost affection (Fig. 98). The contrast in the emaciated form of Sudāma and the ample proportions of the other figures, the beaming pleasure in the eyes of Kṛishṇa and the embarrassed look of Sudāma, though the figure is somewhat worn, are indeed a very interesting study.

Undoubtedly, these murals inspired Raja Ravi Varma, the famous painter of Travancore, who has a special crown for his Kṛishṇa with the peacock feathers on top. Other details of dress and ornamenta-

Fig. 96. Rāma and Lakshmaṇa as archers, 18th century, Trichur

Fig. 97. Gajalakshmī, Veṇugopāla and Subrahmaṇya, 18th century, Padmanābhapuram Palace

tion, even the peacock feather fan and other details, can be observed in the paintings of Ravi Varma, who was as learned in Sanskrit lore as he was acquainted with the 18th century traditions of Kerala, whether from Cochin or from Travancore, as it was common tradition throughout. The crown of Kṛishṇa in the company of Sudāma at Trichūr is not different from that of Giridhārī from the Maṭṭāncheri Palace, both of which ultimately seek their inspiration in the earlier paintings of Vishṇu as Kṛishṇa, playing the drum for Śiva as the dancer in the Ettumānūr panel of Naṭarāja, where, however, this feature is not so developed as in the 18th century paintings.

The murals from the Triprayār Temple, along with those from Tiruvañchikuḷam, present an earlier phase of late 16th-17th century work from this region. In this the wealth of decoration is minute in its detail, and the crown itself is almost like a *kalaśa* on the head, with a full blown lotus with its petals spread out occupying it almost entirely. Lotus petals issue from the gaping mouth of the *makarakuṇḍalas* (crocodile shaped rings) on the ear and very often appear as tassels also for the hem of the garment here and there. A hexagonal pattern in the wheel and a stylised conch, both with tri-pronged flames at four
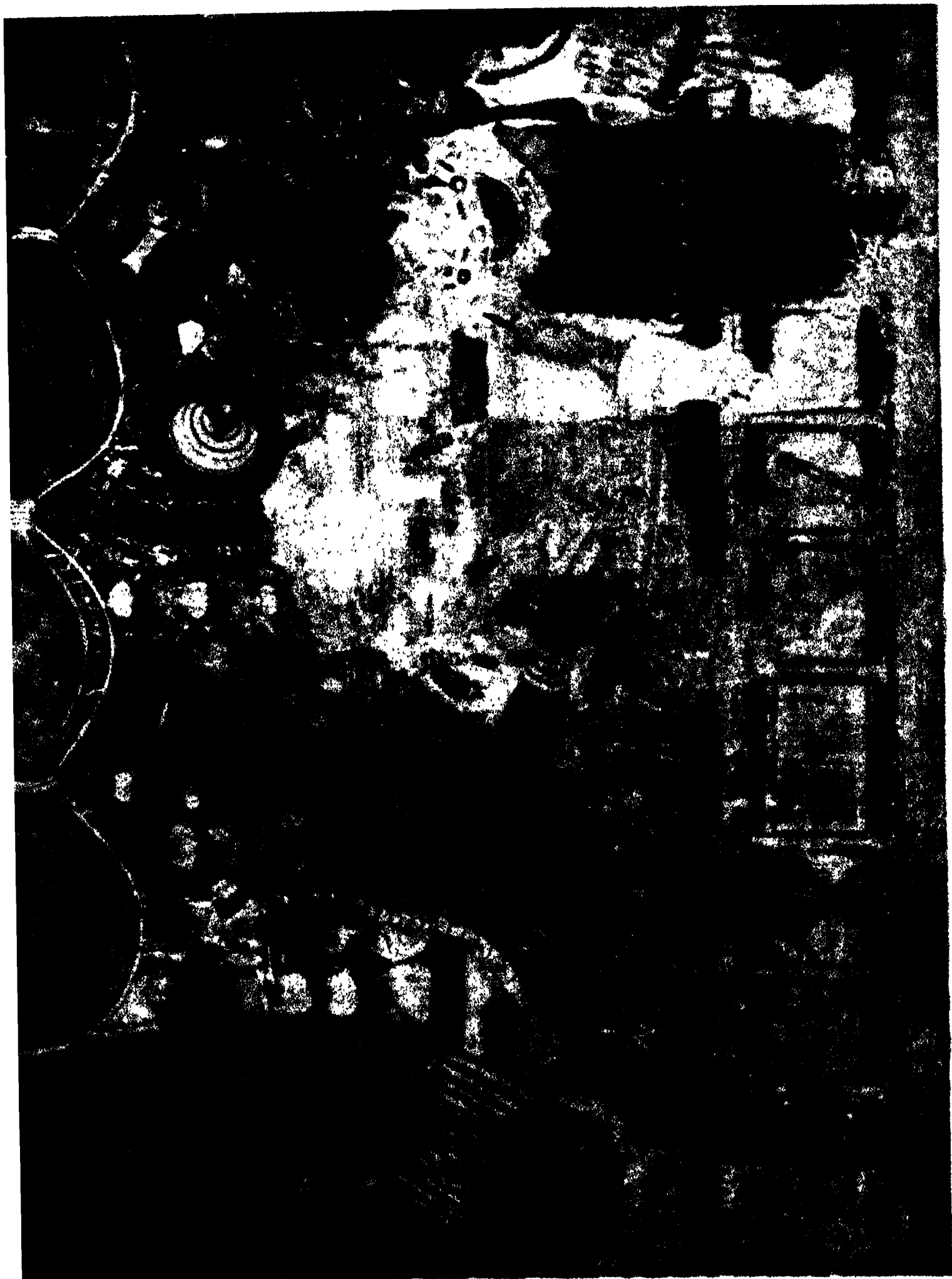
Fig. 98. Krishṇa and Kuchela, 18th century, Trichur
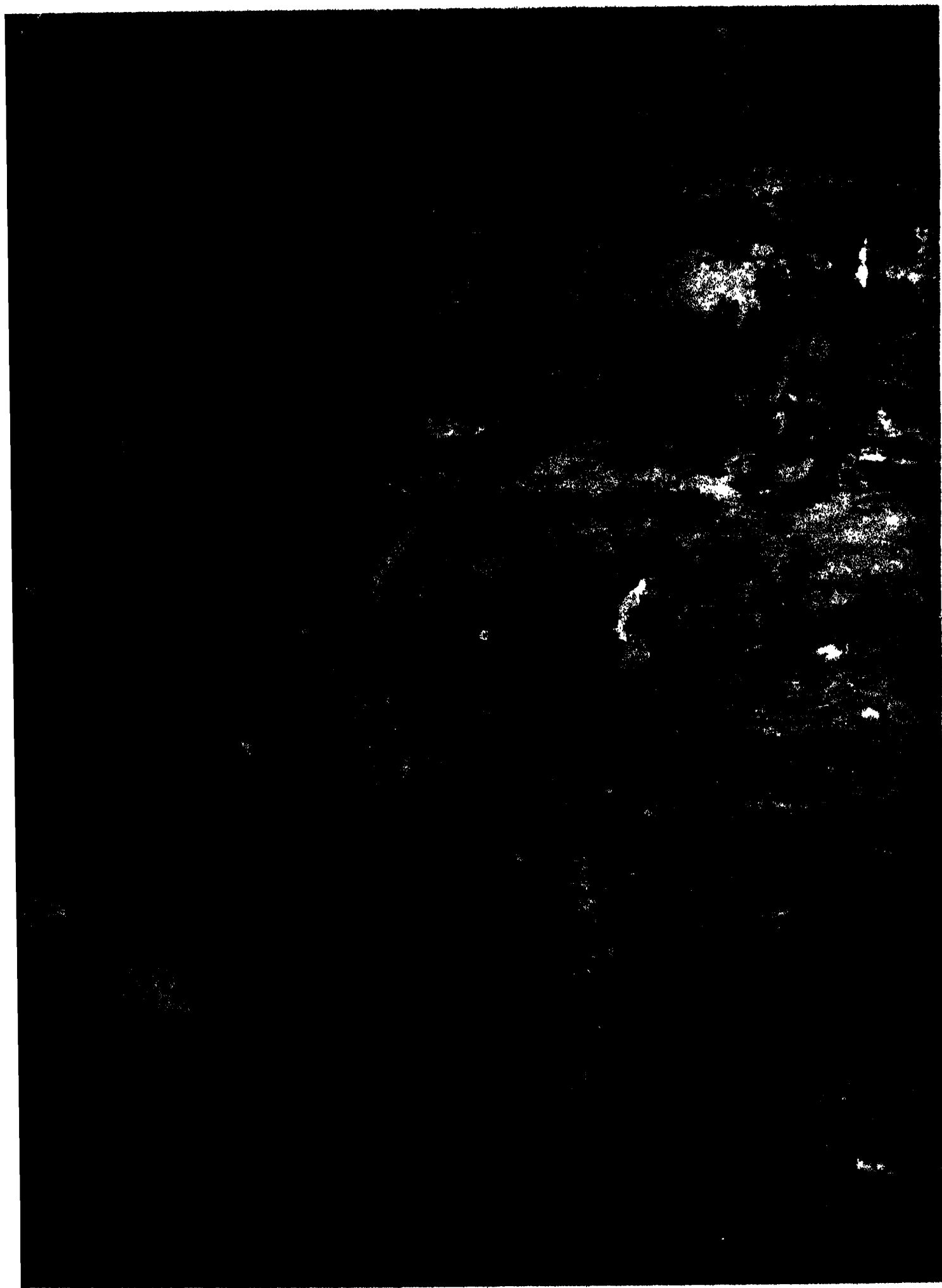
Fig. 99. Veṇugopāla, 16th-17th century, Tiruvañchikuḷam

points, characterise Vishṇu's weapons (Fig. 103). The *chhannavīra* (cross band), the *kāṇṭhī* (necklet) and the *bhujasūtra* (armlet string), along with the *udarabandha* (stomach band) and the sinuous *yajñopavīta*, become more decorative and exuberant than even in Hoysaḷa sculpture. Around the crown is the outline of a halo, which is close to Chāḷukya tradition. In the 18th century paintings, circular decorative strips are often used on either side of principal figures, as may be observed in the Veṇugopāla painting from Trichūr, a decoration which we can see even now in the Guruvāyūr Temple.

In the neighbourhood of Travancore the paintings in the temple at Ettumānūr should be reckoned the earliest after those of Tirunandikkarai, and go back to the 16th century. Coomaraswamy held the painting of Naṭarāja in the *gopuram* of this temple as a very important old example of 'Dravidian painting'. It is also interesting for its tremendous size (12′×8′). An inscription in the temple, referring to the repairs and purification ceremony in about 1445 A.D., indicates that these paintings should be of about that time. This Naṭarāja with sixteen arms, dancing on Apasmāra, presents a fusion of northern and southern traditions, the former derived through Chāḷukya Deccan. The *vṛishabha-dhvaja*, bull banner, recalls a similar one in the hand of the earlier dancing Śiva at Paṭṭaḍakal, here introduced, as in the Umāmaheśvara panel usually in the Deccan. As devotional literature was very popular in Malabar it is not at all surprising that a hymn like the *Pradoshastava* has been closely followed to group the figures composing the space outside the circle of light around Naṭarāja. Vishṇu plays the *mṛidaṇga*, Brahmā keeps time, Indra sounds the flute, while sages like Nārada and goddesses like Pārvatī, Lakshmī and Sarasvatī witness the exhilarating dance of Śiva. On top, four little boy saints appear with folded hands, as in the Maṭṭāncheri group of Umāmaheśvara, suggesting the devotion of Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra, most popular in the realm of *bhakti* or devotion. In the land of the *Nārāyaṇīyam* no opportunity could be missed for introducing these juvenile saints. The *triśūla* of Śiva with the curves of the prongs in Chāḷukya fashion, suggests the main source of inspiration. In all these figures the halo around the crown points to the same source, as also the exaggerated detail of ornamentation.

The paintings from Padmanābhapuram Palace (Fig. 97), fresh and well preserved, have a wealth of detail and iconographic interest and are typical of excellent work of the 18th century. Seated Vishṇu, Śeshaśāyī, Mahishamardinī, Durgā on the cut head of a buffalo, Bhairava beside his dog, Harihara, Gaṇeśa and other themes are executed with great skill. Śiva as *Dakshiṇāmūrti*, with *yogapaṭṭa* on his left foot, seated under the banyan tree, attended by *Ṛishis*, is a delightful composition on the wall above an entrance. The offering of huge bunches of plantain, milk porridge and cakes to Gaṇeśa, to the accompaniment of music, with stately lamp stands branching off at the sides, which are peculiar to Malabar, is most interesting. The Śāstā here recalls Revanta, the son of Sūrya, in North Indian sculpture. It is a spirited hunting scene with the hounds let after the wild and ferocious denizens of the forest.

The temple of Trichakrapuram has painting in a style that became more popular in the latter half of the 18th century, but exhibiting greater vitality. These are comparable to the paintings from Trichūr and the latest phase at Maṭṭāncheri. The Kṛishṇa, fondled by Nanda and Yaśodā, and taught to walk slowly by cautiously placing his steps is indeed a masterpiece. The painting of Gajendramoksha from the

Fig. 100. Lakshmaṇa, Bharata and Śatrughna, 16th-17th century, Tiruvañchikuḷam

Fig. 101. Veṇugopāla, 16th-17th century, Triprayār
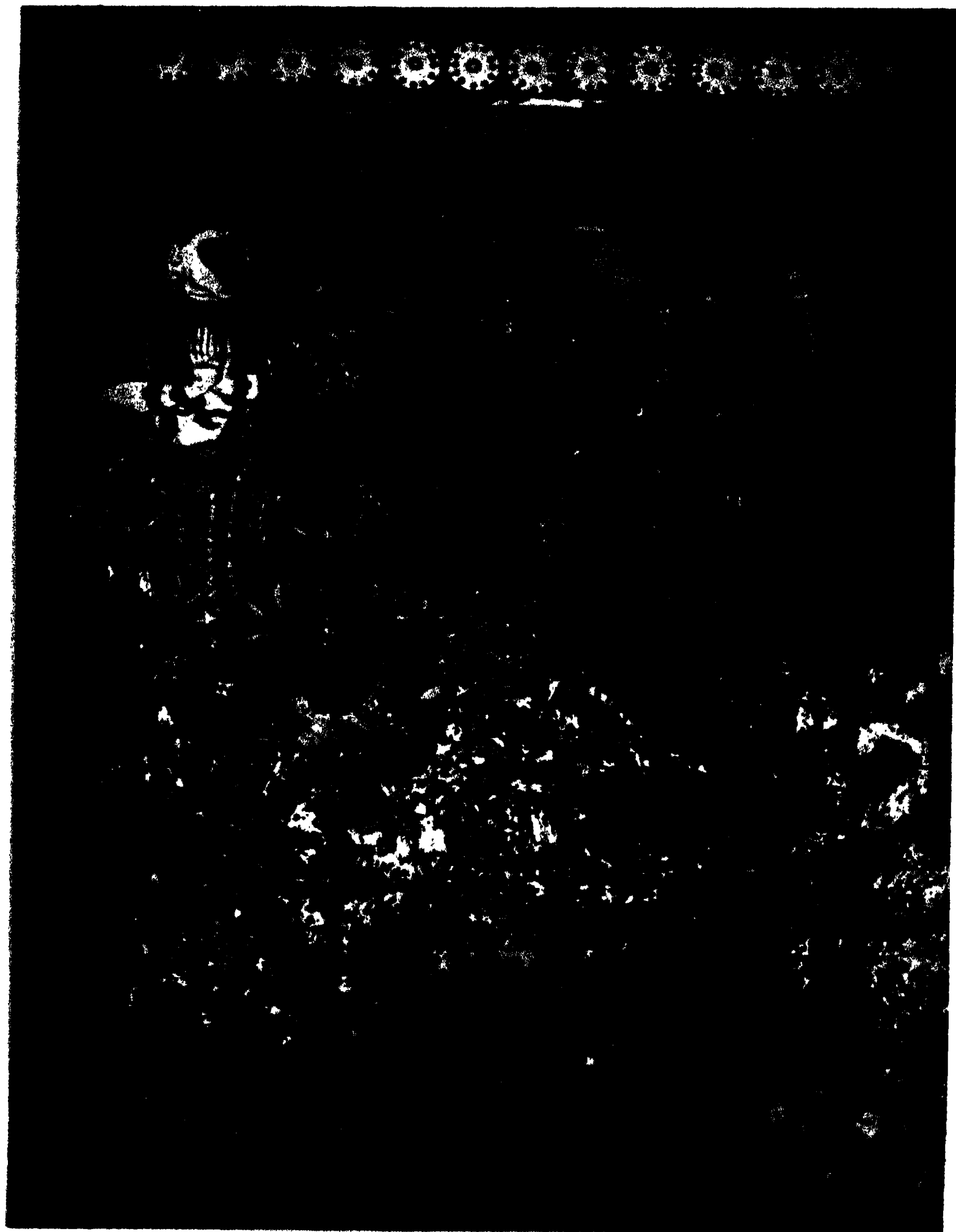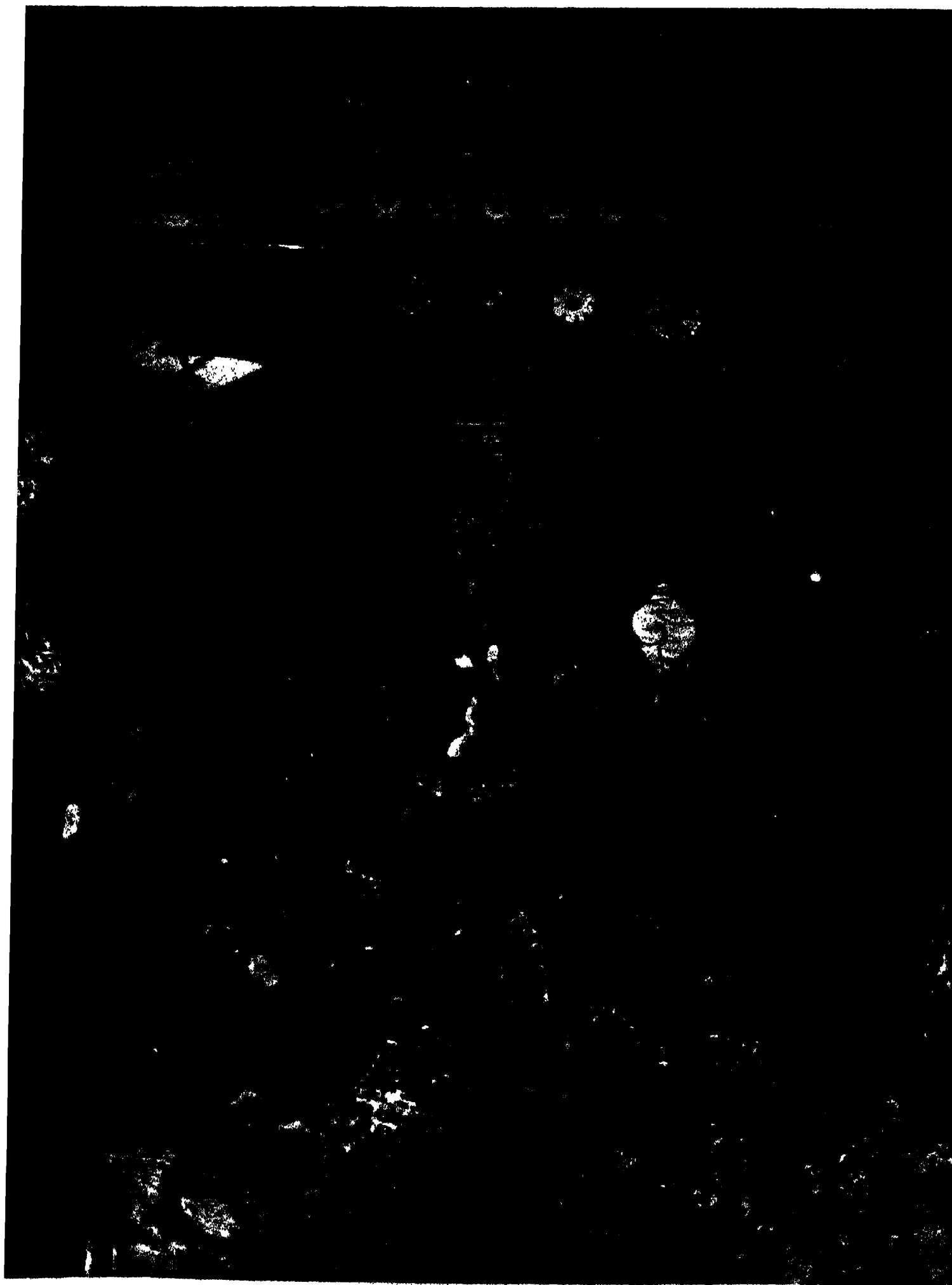
Fig. 103. Yoganārāyāṇa, 16th-17th century, Triprayār

Kṛishṇāpuram Palace, which is earlier by a few decades, shows Vishṇu, on Garuḍa, coming to the rescue of the afflicted animal that cried for help. But, here, though following an earlier tradition of style, it fails to impress, as it lacks the spirit of the Garuḍanārāyaṇa, with Śrī and Bhūdevī, from the Maṭṭāncheri Palace.

Arjuna shooting at the moving mark and his marriage with Draupadī, from the temple of Panayanarkāvu, is an example of inferior work; it is interesting to observe that the same theme in the Virūpāksha Temple at Hampi, executed during the Vijayanagara period, shows greater skill.

In studying the pictorial art of Kerala one has to bear in mind its close association with wood carving which was, apart from murals, the most prolific form of decoration in temples. The great length of frieze and bracket figure have often to be compared with the murals; and these in their turn illustrate, at every stage, the colourful life of the noblemen at court, the peasants in the village, the animals in the wood, the birds on the wing, the fields and meadows, the groves and orchards, the temples and tanks, the dance and mirth, the lights and bells and all the appendages for ceremonial worship that made up the picturesque life of medieval Kerala.

The form in Kerala has been a continuous blend of the earlier Chāḷukya-Hoysaḷa with the later Vijayanagara with a pronounced bias for local details of form and ornamentation. An earlier and less ornamentally loaded mode of depiction, typical of the 15-16th century paintings can be noticed in the fragments of illustration in the manuscript of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (Figs. 104, 107) in the possession of Mr. Nilakandhan Nambudiripad of Kanjur Mana, Chunangad, Ottapalam, Kerala, kindly made available to me by Dr. U. P. Shah, Deputy Director, Oriental Institute, Baroda.

Fig. 104. Śeshaśāyī Vishṇu and the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha, Manuscript illustration, 16th century, Courtesy of Mr. Nilakandhan Nambudiripad

Mahrāṭṭa

18th-19th centuries A.D.

TOWARDS the end of the 17th century the Nāyaka power became weak and the constant feuds between Tañjāvūr and Madurai gave the opportunity for the Mahrāṭṭas to interfere. Actually Venkojī, the half-brother of Śivājī, marched into Tañjāvūr, ostensibly to help the son of Vijayarāghava Nāyaka to regain his lost kingdom, but actually because of the internal dissensions in the Tañjāvūr court itself, and finally established himself as the ruler of Tañjāvūr. Śivājī very generously allowed independent possession, by his brother, of territory in the South, both at Bangalore in the Deccan, and Tañjāvūr and Jiñji in the Tamil area. His sons, Shāhājī, Serfojī and Tukojī, ruled one after the other, until finally their power was shaken by the Mughal invasions. For a few more decades there was disorder in this area, through the interference of the French and Hyder Ali, with the English unable to be of effective help. Even when the English could be of help, the prosperity of Tañjāvūr so excited the greed of Muhammad Ali, the Nawab of the Karṇāṭak, that with the connivance of the Madras Government, he greatly jeopardised the position of Tañjāvūr, though finally the Board of Directors of the East India Company officially did justice and placed Sarfojī, the adopted son of Tulsājī, on the throne. Sarfojī was a versatile scholar, with great aesthetic taste, and was very well counselled by a Danish missionary, Schwartz, who created in him a love for several branches of the fine arts, science, languages and literature.

During the time of the Mahrāṭṭas in the South there was great encouragement of music, dance, literary composition. Every art and craft flourished. Tañjāvūr and Kumbakoṇam became great centres of art and culture. The Deccani mode of painting, as it obtained in Mahārāshṭra and further south, was introduced in Tañjāvūr, and enriched by the local style of the Nāyaka period, which was only an expression of Vijayanagara idiom, resulted in a new school with its own individuality, which arose towards the middle of the 18th century. Several carvings in ivory and wood, closely following this tradition, have also been found as examples of this period of art in the south.

The paintings are characterised by the use of pure colours, avoiding mixing, but with slight, stylised modelling, effected by shading the inside of the contour. The principal colours are red, yellow, blue-black and white, all of them pure colours. Jewels, drapery and architectural elements, like pillars and canopy, are slightly raised, as in low relief, by the use of a special paste composed of fine sawdust and glue, carefully modelled, and covered with gold leaf, after fixing in it semi-precious stones of different hues. This is a special characteristic of the Tañjāvūr mode. The principal figure very often is of larger scale than the rest, and in spite of the best representation of portraiture, as in several pictures of the rulers and noblemen, a special type of stylization is apparent. The figures are chubby and plump, seeming indolent.
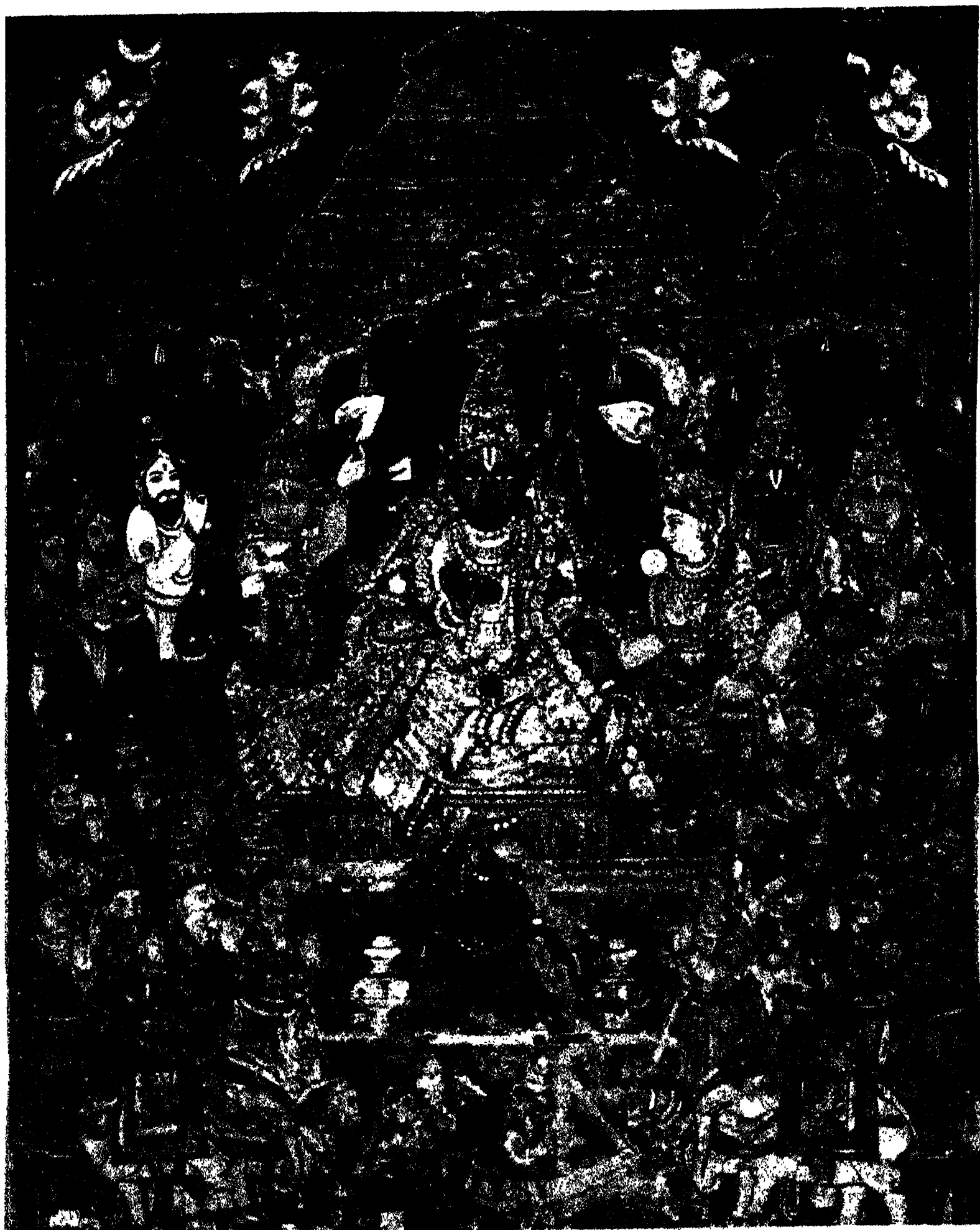
Fig. 105. Rāma's coronation, Mahrāṭṭa, early 19th century, Palace, Tañjāvūr

Fig. 106. Navanita Kṛishṇa. Mahrāṭṭa, early 19th century, ***Tañjavūr, National Museum, New Delhi***

The Schools and Their Styles

THE earliest phase of painting, Sātavāhana, from Caves 9 and 10 at Ajaṇṭā, shows an advanced technique and treatment which presuppose a long and continuous tradition, examples of which are not available.

Though the faces are rounded and chubby, the body is slim and slender. The eyes are rather large and open and the look is mostly a stare, unlike that of figures in Vākāṭāka paintings a few centuries later. The turban is heavy, but the apparel is simple for male figures, while for the feminine figures the simple pearl necklace is a single strand or the *phalakahāra* (composed of short strands of pearls and gem-set slabs at intervals), the *mekhalā* (waist zone) and heavy anklets. The treatment of the braid is simple, with the circular *chaṭulātilaka maṇi* (forehead jewel) prominent. The furniture, like the circular seat and the high-backed chair, and architectural details, are characteristic of the age. The animals and trees are treated in a very natural manner.

The colours appear deep, with a rare achievement of volume, but sufficiently controlled to form fine compositions. There is frontality to a certain extent, which the painter is attempting to overcome. These paintings approach the slightly advanced style of Sānchī rather than the more primitive style of Bhārhut. Nevertheless the treatment of clouds and the depiction of ethereal figures, that move softly in mid-air, is yet to be evolved a few centuries hence.

The next phase at Ajaṇṭā, the Vākāṭaka, affords enough material for study. Figures here are more sophisticated. The face tends to be a charming oval, the eyes are vivacious, the vacant stare of the earlier phase being completely eliminated, and side-long glances significantly introduced. The braid is not only elaborate and pearl-decked, but tends sometimes to be arranged towards one side, a fashion that still survives in Kerala. The earlier, simple jewellery becomes more elaborate, but only adds to the charm of the figures, unlike the later medieval load of heavy decoration.

The couches, thrones and other items of furniture and details of architecture are entirely different from those of the earlier period and are in accord with the style of the age. The trappings of animals, like the elephants and horses, are more elaborate than in the earlier period.

The movement of figures of celestials in the sky amidst clouds, with garments fluttering and the disposition of their limbs suggesting motion, with the face sometimes charmingly turned to look back or to the side, all represent a definite advance in artistic skill. The patterns of cloud are so charming an innovation that they are continued in the following periods of the Chāḷukyas and Rāshṭrakūṭas.

The colours are rich, bright and natural, with an attempt at modelling. The light colour scheme of clouds, the green of the orchard or plantain trees, the deep shades of the forest, the colourful setting

of palaces and pillared halls, the balance of colour in arrangement of groups of figures, with subtle differences in shades of complexion, all point to the ability of the painter in handling the colour palette.

Intense study of form and anatomy of man, plant and animal and bird, is revealed in the mastery of foreshortening, back view and graceful flexions in several human figures, in the portrayal of orchard and woods, the elephant in different attitudes of motion, and birds on the wing, as in the arresting scene of the *Hamsa jātaka*. The pattern of this scene would do credit to any of the best of Chinese masters, noted for fine bird studies.

Even the fragments of Western Chāḷukya painting at Bādāmi prove the continuation of this classical tradition. The movement of the dancing figures is excellently balanced by those seated, with well arranged groups around them. The colour scheme is soothing to the eye and continues the earlier Ajaṇṭā tradition.

The Pallava fragments of painting, both at Panamalai and Kāñchīpuram, clearly show the mastery of the Pallava painter over line in figure drawing, design and restraint in use of colour, with great aesthetic effect.

Early Pāṇḍya and Chera paintings are exactly in this mode.

The Choḷa painter continued the earlier Pallava tradition with great fervour. But the lapse of a couple of centuries does reveal a different type of anatomy of man, beast and bird in the murals of the Bṛihadīśvara Temple. The face is more circular than the oval ones in Pallava figures. The apparel changes and the ornamentation here is more elaborate than in Pallava paintings. The jackets worn by Rājarāja's warriors clearly bespeak their own period.

The architectural details, both secular and religious, like the palace, temple *vimāna* and *gopura* with tank, halls and festival gathering, are all a faithful picture of the age.

The gigantic Tripurāntaka form, and the group of celestials aiding him, demonstrate the ease with which the Choḷa painter could manage titanic figures, while the dancers and the group, in lovely flexions, and dwarfs, playing drums in funny attitudes, prove his hand at finicky detail and in composing groups.

The treatment of clouds, in the celestial spheres, where dancing nymphs are portrayed, is entirely different from the earlier patterns at Ajaṇṭā, but are not very different from those in Rāshṭrakūṭa paintings from Ellora, from the Jaina temple, which, though earlier than the Choḷa ones, are nearer them in date. While at Ajaṇṭā there are long diagonal rows of peak-shaped clouds with successive lines on top, as if forming encrustations, those here at Tañjāvūr are horizontal rows of clover-shaped clouds.

The Hoysaḷa paintings, of which the only examples are on palm leaves, are superior to contemporary Kākatīya murals, in figure drawing, design and colour scheme. While the Hoysaḷa paintings still echo the classical style, the Kākatīya ones betray conventionalism and approach the folk method of delineation. Colours are flat and modelling almost unattempted, a factor which becomes a feature in all phases. The element of ornamentation characteristic of Hoysaḷa sculpture is observed also in painting of the period.

The Vijayanagara phase is interesting as a study of the tendencies in conventionalisation. The peculiar dress of the time, the fan-shaped folds of the undergarment, the end of the cloth covering the breasts, the tight jacket and large coarse braid are characteristic of women, while men are portrayed in different modes of dress, the chieftains and princes having long conical caps, so characteristic of court dress of the time.

Taste coarsens somewhat; feminine palanquin bearers, horses and elephants composed of feminine groups, so arranged as to suggest the figures of the animals, as mounts for Manmatha and Rati, become favourite themes, often repeated.

Still there are some paintings of this period which show that the painter's flair for art has not yet abated. The Nāyaka phase is much the same. In this period the tendency for long bands to narrate episodes and to label scenes, through long descriptions in Tamil or Telugu, according to the region where the paintings occur, becomes almost universal and this is carried on from the murals to miniatures on paper and cloth, on temple hangings and in book illustrations.

In Kerala there is a strong bias for picturesque Kathakali modes, of dress and decoration. The faces of the figures, as well as the anatomy of figures, are heavy and the eyes somewhat somnolent. The crown, with lotus arrangement, or with peacock feathers on top, as in the case of Kṛishṇa's, is heavy, with the aureole almost fastened to it.

The architectural details are in conformity with those of Kerala, as are the trees and items of domestic use. The tree of lamps and the heavy lamp stand, the jack fruit offering for Gaṇeśa and other details, show a strong local bias and the painter's love of his immediate neighbourhood.

In details of ornamentation, the Hoysaḷa school has had a tremendous influence in Kerala, with an overall touch of the Vijayanagara patterns, and with a strong bias for weird Kathakali make-up. The painter has a keen eye for details and a passion for groups and group compositions.

The colour scheme in Kerala painting is rich and deep. The shades are never light, but always somewhat sombre. The figures have much movement and are always dramatic. The effort to represent volume is rendered by a slight darkening at the edges in an attempt at modelling.

The last phase of painting in the South, under the Mahrāṭṭas, represents flat figures, mostly pale and lacking the essential spark of life.

Fig. 107. Gaṇeśa, Manuscript illustration, 16th century, Courtesy of Mr. Nilakandhan Nambudiripad

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